

**A Study Of Female Correctional Officers
Employed at the Washington State
Penitentiary**

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A STUDY OF FEMALE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS EMPLOYED AT THE WASHINGTON STATE PENITENTIARY

ABSTRACT

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The participation of women in nontraditional occupations has been a controversial issue throughout American history. Contemporary studies (e.g. Barrett, 1979; Blau, 1979; Gerson, 1985) have examined those individuals who choose to be employed in nontraditional occupations and attempt to identify the unique qualities that these individuals possess. A nontraditional occupation is one that has been historically dominated by a particular gender and has required personal or social characteristics traditionally associated with that gender. Many nontraditional occupations exist in modern American society such as truck driver, corporate executive, and miner among numerous others. However, the one nontraditional occupation which appears particularly prone to gender stereotyping, is that of a female correctional officer employed at a male correctional facility. Due to the difficulties associated with studying the correctional system and the wary nature of correctional staff, research on conditions faced by female correctional officers in such a setting has been minimal at best.

This research project examines the situation of female correctional officers employed in a male dominated profession. The project attempts to answer five fundamental questions within the context of the Washington State Penitentiary;

- 1) *What are some of the experiences of female officers employed at the Washington State Penitentiary?*
- 2) *Does the population of female correctional officers share common social or psychological characteristics?*
- 3) *Do organizational barriers exist which serve to prevent women from successful integration into the occupation of correctional officer, and what are these barriers?*
- 4) *What strategies do female correctional officers adopt to cope with their unique occupational environment, and then is there a relationship between the strategy they choose and their gender-role orientation?*
- 5) *Which changes would improve the occupational future of females employed in male correctional facilities?*

If successful in answering these questions, this study will serve to further an understanding of women employed in numerous nontraditional occupations.

To address these questions, female correctional officers employed at the Washington State Penitentiary were involved in open-ended interviews with the researcher. In addition, the Bem sex role inventory was administered to the officers in order to examine the impact of gender role orientation upon the type of coping strategy the officer adopted.

In addition to the biographical information collected about the female officers, an attempt was made to test the accuracy of the following "working hypotheses":

- A) Female correctional officers often encounter resentment, hostility, and barriers when beginning their employment in male correctional facilities due to their small numbers. Over time, credibility is established, and the women are integrated into the officer population.
- B) The concept of tokenism is applicable to the situation of women employed as correctional officers in male facilities, and may be one of the most significant factors in decreasing their ability to succeed.
- C) Female correctional officers will tend to bond together in an attempt to solve their common problems, due to the lack of alternative support groups.
- D) Females ranking masculine on the sex role inventory will be more apt to assume a coping strategy that is consistent with this orientation. Females ranking feminine on the sex role inventory will be more likely to assume a coping strategy that is consistent with this orientation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1	The History and Legal Context of Women Employed As Correctional Officers_____	4
Chapter 2	Methodology/Research Design_____	8
Chapter 3	Organizational Barriers to Females Employed In Nontraditional Occupations_____	11
Chapter 4	Coping Strategies Utilized By Female Correctional Officers_____	19
Chapter 5	Research Findings_____	24
Chapter 6	Coping Strategies and Role Adaptation Of Female Correctional Officers Employed at The Washington State Penitentiary_____	51
Chapter 7	Summary & Conclusions_____	59
References Cited	_____	64
Literature Review	_____	65
Appendix	_____	67

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORY AND LEGAL CONTEXT OF WOMEN EMPLOYED AS CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

This chapter is a description/discussion of the historical and legal background of women employed at male correctional facilities.

Introduction

Prior to 1972, the the prevention of female employment as correctional officers in male correctional facilities across the United States was both unquestioned and unchallenged. Between 1972 and 1987, many changes took place both in society and in the penal institution. This made it possible for women to enter the occupation of correctional officer. Before 1972, there were no females employed as correctional officers in male correctional institutions in the United States. By 1987, women comprised 6% of the correctional officers employed in these institutions. This increase in the number of female correctional officers may be attributable to two important factors.

The first factor which played a role in the increased number of female correctional officers was the 1972 amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act proscribes employment discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, or origin. This amendment laid the foundation for the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) which became an important tool in the enforcement of Title VII. Although Title VII clearly mandates a policy of non-discrimination in hiring, it also contains the provision that: *"some 'discriminatory' practices may be tolerated if there is a 'bona fide' occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of that particular business or enterprise."* Traditionally the B.F.O.Q. (Bona Fide Occupational Qualification) provision had been utilized in situations where issues such as inmate privacy and/or officer safety were prominent. In the present day, several positions within the penal system are subject to the B.F.O.Q. provision. Some of these positions include: searching female visitors, working in intensive management units, doing feces-watch, and working in segregation. Searching female visitors is a position open only to female officers, while the others are open only to male officers. This B.F.O.Q. provision has been the subject of great controversy, and even in the present day there exist ambiguities about whether or not a position should be limited to only one particular gender.

In 1977, the controversy over whether or not a position should be defined as a BFOQ exception, led to charges of employment discrimination. In a case that eventually went to the Supreme Court, (Dothard v. Rawlinson), Diane Rawlinson charged that the Alabama State Penitentiary had engaged in discriminatory hiring practices. Rawlinson applied for the position of correctional officer at the Alabama State Penitentiary, but was denied employment on the grounds that she did not meet necessary height and weight requirements. Rawlinson proceeded

to file a class action suit claiming that the restrictions on height and weight violated her civil rights as mandated by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Before the case reached the federal district court, Alabama instated a new rule which prevented women from working in positions at the penitentiary which involved any contact with the inmates, "the no-contact rule". The federal district court decided that both the height/weight restrictions and the new rule preventing females from working in contact positions were in violation of the Civil Rights Act and Title VII. The state of Alabama appealed the court decision to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1977. Supreme Court Justice Stewart reversed the ruling on the "no-contact rule", and designated the Alabama Prison as a B.F.O.Q. exemption from Title VII. In other words, the court utilized the B.F.O.Q. qualification as just cause for denying Rawlinson employment at the prison in a position requiring contact with inmates.

This court decision is extremely significant for a variety of reasons. First, this is the only case of employment discrimination in male correctional facilities to ever go before the Supreme Court. This decision therefore set the precedent for court cases regarding discriminatory hiring practices in the correctional system. Second, this is the first time the Supreme Court has made civil rights conditional on the requirements of an occupation. Third, the Supreme Court made this ruling without considering any evidence that women were less capable of performing the job than males or that the presence of women represented a security risk to the prison. I believe that this decision is a prime example of the unfounded prejudices and discriminatory practices that have plagued women employed as correctional officers in male prisons. Interestingly, the precedent set forth in the *Dothard v. Rawlinson* case has never been successfully used again in the lower courts to deny the employment of a female officer in a male correctional institution.

The second factor which affected the entry of women into male correctional institutions was a widespread change in the philosophy of corrections during the 1970's. Prior to 1972, the goal of the penal institution was the maintenance of custody. Custody refers to the maintenance of order among the inmates and the prevention of inmate escape. During the early 1970's, a spirit of liberalism permeated the United States penal system, and the former goal of custody was expanded to include rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is the attempt to "normalize" the prison environment in such a way that inmates will be prepared to adapt to normal society after being released. This normalization process is also reflected in the formal selection of staff. Through affirmative action programs, a mixture of individuals with different racial, ethnic, and gender backgrounds was hired in an attempt to reflect the relative proportions of races and gender in the general population. Rehabilitation utilizes programs such as recreation, education, and increased privileges to counterbalance the negative effects of imprisonment. During the early 1970's, the administrations of many correctional institutions viewed the female gender as possessing traits that would be consistent with this new goal of rehabilitation. For this reason,

many women were hired on as correctional officers in male correctional facilities. Since the late 1970's, the emphasis upon rehabilitation has lessened, and penal institutions have returned to custody as their primary concern (Jurik, 1985). This situation is problematic because the female officers hired in response to the rehabilitation movement are now placed in positions that are solely custody oriented. Many male officers believe that women represent a security risk, and thus feel resentment toward both the female officers and the system that brought women into the position of correctional officer in the first place.

Together, Title VII and the rehabilitation movement served to increase the numbers of women employed in the U.S. correctional system. It must be noted however, that the entry of females into the correctional system has been a difficult struggle which is still far from over. Many barriers must still be overcome before women are adequately represented in the correctional system. I believe that the basic gender stereotypes and biases of the American society must be realigned to meet the reality of equal employment and the general equality of the sexes.

Prior to 1971, the Washington State Penitentiary housed both male and female inmates. The female inmate population was supervised by female staff and the population of male inmates was supervised by a male staff. Because of this, there was no competition between the male and female officers for the same positions or promotions. The female officers, known as matrons, performed the same duties as the male officers, but they depended upon the male staff in cases where the female inmates were violent. Although women were "in charge" of the female inmates, they were ultimately supervised by a male warden and they were dependent upon the male officers. In 1971 the female inmate population was moved from the Washington State Penitentiary to an all-female institution named Purdy located in western Washington. Most of the matrons followed the female inmates to Purdy and continued to fill their previous positions as matrons. At this point in time, some of the female officers remained at the Penitentiary and were hired for a variety of non-contact positions. These positions included working in the visiting room, searching female visitors, working in the mail room, and a variety of clerical positions in the administrative department. By the mid-1970s, the female staff had begun to assume positions which included inmate supervision. These pioneering females were greeted with intense resistance from their male co-workers. The male officers believed that the female officers were invading their territory, were creating a security risk, and were not capable of handling the many demands of the position (long-time correctional officer, 1989). Despite such attitudes, female officers have remained an integral part of the correctional staff at the Washington State Penitentiary for thirteen years and have been slowly growing in numbers over this period of time.

Today, the Washington State Penitentiary employs 524 correctional officers of which 49 are females. In terms of percentages, females officers account for only 9.4% of the correctional officer population. According to Richard Ponsler (Director of Training at the W.S.P.), this percentage has remained relatively constant over the past six years due to turnover rates and other factors. The penitentiary employs many other people in positions including clerical workers, counselors, medical staff, and administrators, among others. The correctional staff may be broken down in terms of ranks similar to the military. In addition to the 524 correctional officers, there is one male superintendent, two male captains, twelve male lieutenants, and fifty six sergeants of which five are female. These figures make it evident that the Washington State Penitentiary is predominantly staffed by men.

In terms of age, the correctional officer population as a whole ranges between 22 and 62 years of age with 54% of the officers being between the ages of 28 and 40 and a mean age of 39 years. The male officers range between the ages of 22 and 69 with 54% of the them between the ages of 28 and 41 and with a mean age of 39 years. The female officers range between the ages of 23 and 61 with 54% of the them between the ages of 26 and 37 and with a mean age of 37 years.

The racial composition of correctional officers employed at the penitentiary is 90% Whites, 5.5% Blacks, 2.7% Hispanics, 3 Native Americans, and 3 Asians. The male correctional officers include 432 Whites (90.9%), 24 Blacks (5.1%), 13 Hispanics (2.7%), 3 Native Americans, and 3 Asians. The female correctional officers include 43 Whites (87.8%), 5 Blacks (10.2%), and 1 Hispanic (2.0%). In terms of percentages, it appears that the female staff is more racially integrated than the male staff but this may be due to the large difference in population sizes.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY/RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter is a description/discussion of the research methods and the complications which are unique to this particular study.

The idea which led to this project was conceived during the 1987/1988 academic year while I was involved in an internship at the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla Washington. Between the conception of the idea and the beginning of this project a variety of forces modified the framework of the study into its final form. These significant forces include; Mary Lou Whalen (Whitman student and female correctional officer), The Whitman Prison Research Group, Keith Farrington (thesis advisor and professor), and the Department of Corrections in Olympia Washington. In early December, the final project proposal was approved by the Washington State Penitentiary Administration, and was sent to the Department of Corrections in Olympia, Washington. The approval from the Department of Corrections was not returned to me until early March, at which time research promptly began. This initial delay served to shorten the amount of time which could be spent on the project. However, this delay in the approval process may be interpreted as a logical outgrowth of the nature of a highly bureaucratic organization in which many other concerns take precedence over an undergraduate study. On a positive note, the delay did provide extra time to carefully research the existing materials, and to fine tune the mechanical aspects of the research design. This study is qualitative in nature and was designed to first collect rich data about female correctional officers and then to place the collected information into an analytic framework. The study attempts to synthesize existing materials on female correctional officers and the information collected on female officers employed at the Washington State Penitentiary. The study began with some expectations derived from pertinent literature, but for the most part the study attempted to be free from preconceptions. The information regarding female officers currently employed at the Washington State Penitentiary was collected through the use of unstructured, open-ended interviews with the female officers. This method of data collection was used because it allows for flexibility and the emergence of further questions and answers during interaction with the interviewee.

The female officers were contacted by mail through the prison mail system. The officers were provided with a brief description of the study and a consent form to fill out if they were interested in participating in the study. Those officers who chose to participate were asked to place the signed consent form into the protected envelope that was included, and to return it to the Office of the Administrative Assistant. (A copy of the project description and the attached consent form have been included in the appendix of this document). On the consent form, the

female officers were asked to sign their name and to identify a convenient place and time at which they could be reached by telephone.

Of the forty nine letters distributed to the female officers, only eight forms were signed and returned to the Administrative Assistants Office. An additional two were mailed to my post office box at the Whitman Student Union. This disappointing rate of return forced me to consider other means of obtaining interviewees. The method used was that of "word of mouth" or "snowball sampling" among the female officers. Mary Lou Whalen, a classmate and a female officer at the Penitentiary, served as a key liaison between my study and the female officers at the Penitentiary. Many of the female officers were hesitant to participate in the study due to concerns regarding confidentiality, anonymity, and the credibility of the researcher. Mary Lou Whalen assured the officers of the confidentiality and anonymity of the study, and associated herself with the study in order to legitimate its purposes. Through this "snowball sampling" strategy, an additional seven interviewees were obtained to result in a total of seventeen subjects or 35% of the female officer population. Given this low return, and because the officers participated in the study on a voluntary basis only, it is entirely possible that the findings of the study do not adequately reflect the entire population of female correctional officers employed at the Washington State Penitentiary. For example, one grouping of female officers not adequately represented in the study were those who work the night shift at the Penitentiary. Factors leading to their lack of participation may include their abnormal sleeping hours, busy daytime schedules, and lack of contact with other female officers.

Officers participated in one on one interviews with the researcher at either a classroom at Whitman College or at their home in Walla Walla. Of the seventeen interviews conducted, thirteen took place on the Whitman Campus, and four took place at the home of the officer. The interviews lasted between thirty minutes and ninety minutes depending upon the schedule and interest of the officer being interviewed. In addition to the interview questions, the Bem sex role inventory was administered to the officers in order to examine the impact of gender role orientation upon the type of coping strategy the officer adopted. (A copy of the BEM sex role inventory, the standardized introduction, and the open-ended questions are included in the appendix of this document).

A major stumbling block encountered during the study was the establishment of trust. This project was somewhat problematic in that it was an attempt to research a group of people who are not accustomed to being studied about issues that are extremely personal in nature. If the information collected was abused, this could result in serious repercussions for the subjects of study. In other words, many officers were afraid that if their names were associated with their responses, their jobs would be placed at risk. This simple reality may explain the general hesitancy of women to participate in the study. The prison is a society within itself, and the

employees have been socialized to keep their experiences at work separate from their civilian life. The officers who did choose to participate in the study will remain anonymous, but still deserve recognition and will make a significant impact upon this project and the experiences of future female correctional officers.

One of my concerns prior to beginning research was regarding the degree to which my own gender would influence the testimony of the interviewees. I was afraid that officers would feel threatened by my gender, and that they would refrain from providing me with pertinent information. Although no attempts were made at addressing this concern, it became apparent that during the interviews, my status as a student took precedence over my status as a male. This "student status" allowed me to interact with the interviewees in a non-threatening manner. Overall, the officers responded to me as a student or a youth who was in a sense gender-neutral. In general, interviewees were quite willing to share their beliefs and experiences as correctional officers. An additional point that may have influenced my interaction with interviewees is that there is a certain degree of trust among professionals in the social sciences/services. I trusted the female officers to provide me with accurate information about their profession, and they in turn trusted me in maintaining confidentiality.

Three key factors may have played a role in the general openness of the interviewees. The first factor was that these individuals had volunteered to participate in the study, and were aware of the questions that would be asked of them. This group of volunteers may have been those officers that felt that their participation would be of value to future females entering the occupation, and that they had a right to express their concerns and beliefs. The second factor was that I was well informed about both the Washington State Penitentiary and the experiences of females employed there. My knowledge allowed the interviewees to discuss issues without having to define terms or explain the basic components of the occupation. The final factor which was purely accidental was that some of the questions served to elicit humorous responses. This introduction of humor allowed the officer to feel more comfortable and at ease during the interview.

In many cases, officers would relate personal experiences and beliefs that were too personal or intimate to be included in the study. These "off the record" comments and experiences certainly served to give me some insights into the correctional officer occupation, but they were not included due to the protection of confidentiality.

The BEM sex role inventory administered to the females was slightly modified. Due to my concern regarding the consistency of answers, the interviewees were instructed to complete the inventory from their perspective as a female officer rather than as a wife, a mother etc... Many of the questions on the inventory were ambiguous or non-applicable to the position of correctional officer and may have reduced the validity of the inventory.

CHAPTER 3

ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS TO FEMALES EMPLOYED IN NONTRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS/CORRECTIONS

This chapter is a discussion/description of the organizational barriers identified in recent literature on the topic of women employed in nontraditional occupations.

Until recently, researchers have argued that the response to women in nontraditional occupations is primarily a consequence of direct sexism. That is, these researchers believe that women have not succeeded in nontraditional occupations due to direct prejudice based on traditional gender assumptions by organization members. These differences are stated generally in terms of the traits that are stereotypically associated with the female gender, and include: nurturance, emotional instability, a fear of achievement, passivity, and physical weakness. Over the last twenty years women have made great advances in nontraditional occupations despite these "differences" that have formed the basis of this "individual" or "gender" model. This advancement of women has called into question the effectiveness of this model in its ability to explain the lack of success experienced by females employed in nontraditional occupations. Although many still subscribe to the explanation provided by the "individual" model, others have attempted to uncover more sophisticated explanations of women's lack of success in nontraditional occupations. Recently, authors such as Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977), Nancy Jurik (1985), and Lynn Zimmer (1986) have argued that structural conditions of the workplace play an integral role in the success or failure of women in nontraditional occupations. Jurik and Zimmer have focused their interpretation on the structural conditions encountered by women employed in male correctional facilities, whereas Kanter has focused her interpretation on the structural barriers that exist in bureaucratic organizations in general. The work done by Kanter serves to lay a foundation for the other two authors, and will therefore be considered first in this discussion.

In her book, Men and Women of the Corporation, (1977), Kanter cites three major areas or dynamics of the organization which directly affect occupational behavior. These are "Opportunity", "Power", and "Relative Numbers". "Opportunity" refers to both the expectations placed upon an employee, and the ability of the employee to climb the hierarchical ladder of an organization. Opportunity is determined by factors such as promotion rate, the number of ladder steps associated with a position, the various career paths which may be pursued from a position, and the availability of occupational challenges. Not all people in an organization have an equal access to opportunity, and this reality serves to create certain barriers for those employees with a low access to opportunity. Kanter argues that many occupational behaviors are a direct consequence of an employee's access to opportunity, rather than due to the characteristics

of that individual. Individuals who have an inferior access to opportunity may tend to engage in the following behaviors as hypothesized by Kanter (pgs.130-163);

- Limit their goals for advancement and downplay the desirability of positions higher than their own on the hierarchical ladder.
- Lower their self-esteem and their perception of their own competence
- Seek satisfaction in areas other than the occupational environment.
- Compare themselves with peers rather than those in positions higher than themselves.
- Be critical of people in positions "higher" than their own.
- Resign themselves to remaining in the same position over time.
- Be concerned with basic survival and the extrinsic rewards offered by the occupation.

These examples of occupational behaviors in response to a low access to opportunity demonstrate that these behaviors are gender-neutral. In other words, these behaviors are in response to the structural condition of low opportunity and not in response to the traits associated with the gender of the employee.

"Power" refers to the ability of an individual to "mobilize resources". This refers to an employee's ability to direct other employees and to perform the job without excessive supervision and intervention from supervisors. The amount of power an individual holds is determined by the characteristics of his or her position in the organization. These characteristics include: the routinization of the work, the degree of discretion the position allows, the amount of visibility the position receives, the relative importance of the position, and the ability to control subordinates. As in the case of access to opportunity, some positions afford greater power than do others which results in barriers for those in positions of low power. A person who is employed in a position of low power may engage in some of the following behaviors as outlined by Kanter (pgs. 164-205):

- Foster lower group morale.
- Behave in a inflexible, authoritarian manner.
- Try to retain as much control as possible thus limiting the opportunities and power of subordinates.
- Utilize coercion rather than persuasion with subordinates.
- Be more protective of occupational territory.
- Act in a menacing way that repels fellow employees.

As with those in a position of low opportunity, employees in positions characterized by low power behave in certain ways in response to the structural conditions by which they are constrained regardless of their individual gender traits. Kanter's argument is double barreled. First, she believes that the basic hierarchical structure of the bureaucratic organization should be modified to allow those in positions characterized by low power and low opportunity to pursue the same goals as those in positions of high power and high opportunity. Second, Kanter believes that the traditional lack of success demonstrated by women employed in nontraditional

occupations is not due simply to their gender differences, but is in response to the structural conditions under which the women are employed.

The final and most significant structural determinant of occupational experiences and behavior of employees is that of "relative numbers", or the proportion of employees of a certain type employed in an organization. Typically, organizations employ numerous groupings of employees categorizable according to race, gender, age, years employed etc... Kanter argues that the relative proportions of the various types result in differential occupational experiences and behaviors.

Organizations may assume one of four patterns depending on the proportional representation of groupings. The first type is one composed of only one social grouping. This type is completely homogeneous, such as all male or all female and is therefore termed a **Uniform Group**. The second type is composed of two types of groupings in extremely different proportions. The majority grouping, generally around 85%, is termed the *dominants*, and the minority (15%) is termed the *tokens*. This case is known as a **Skewed group**. The third type is also composed of two types but in different proportions than the skewed group. In this case, the majority grouping is generally 65%, and the minority 35%. This case is termed the **Tilted group**. The fourth and final type is composed of equal numbers of the two types of members and is termed the **Balanced group**. Each of these groups represents an ideal type, and groups in the social world may vary from these ideal types. The main point of this discussion is that different types of groups are faced with different social consequences.

In the case of women employed in nontraditional occupations, the type of group has generally assumed the second pattern, or the **Skewed group**, with a male majority and a female minority. The minority is characterized by low access to opportunity, high visibility, and low access to power. Conversely, the majority have easy access to opportunity and power, together with a low visibility. This results in a self-perpetuating cycle in which minority members of the organization are in effect denied an ability to succeed in the organization. The situation presents members of the token minority with three everyday problems: "increased visibility", "contrast", and "assimilation".

Since the token group represents a small minority within a larger organizational population, its members capture greater attention than do members of the dominant group. This "increased visibility" results in additional pressures to achieve and to perform the job without mistakes. Tokens as individuals do not have to expend effort to be noticed, but they must work twice as hard as their male counterparts to have their positive achievements recognized. These individuals are easily identified by the dominant group and are subjected to intense scrutiny and discussion in regards to their job performance and their non-ability traits. When a token group member makes a mistake whether job oriented or not, her mistake is

generalized to the whole minority population by the dominant group. In a real sense, employees of the minority type carry the responsibility of proving their individual capabilities in the occupational sphere as well as those of their grouping.

The existence of a smaller population within a larger population creates "contrast". Contrast refers to the polarization of differences between the larger and the smaller groupings. The more powerful dominants become aware of the cultural traits that they share in common while noticing the differences of the tokens. Dominants will often exaggerate their delineating cultural markers, and thus isolate the tokens from the work of the organization. In this way, the more powerful grouping creates boundaries which separate themselves from the weaker grouping.

The third dynamic created by the existence of a minority type among a majority type is that of "assimilation". The process of assimilation is a logical outgrowth of contrast, and takes place when the members of the dominant group ascribe certain stereotypes to the token group. The majority tends to generalize these stereotypes to fit the behaviors of all members of the minority group. In many cases the exaggerated qualities will not be applicable to individual members of the token group, and the dominant group will manipulate their perceptions of these individuals to fit the stereotypes and generalizations. This process is used as a tool to insure that the weaker group will not be integrated into the ranks of the stronger group.

This structural condition of Relative Numbers has many consequences for members of the minority group. These "tokens" are subject to excessive gossip, extensive performance evaluation, and exclusion from a variety of informal occupational networks. Tokens are measured according to two criteria whereas dominants are only measured according to one. Members of the smaller group are measured in their abilities to perform a job as an employee and as a symbol of their group. Dominants are only measured in their ability to perform the tasks of the job as an employee because their group has already proved its abilities to perform the job. When a new employee enters the occupational arena, he or she is given instant credibility if he or she is a member of the majority group. If the new employee is a member of the token group, he or she must first prove his or her abilities in order to establish credibility as an individual and as a symbol of his or her group. However, this process by which a token must establish credibility is quite problematic. If he or she demonstrates his or her ability to a degree that threatens the members of the dominant group, the token will meet resentment and resistance. Moreover, if the token does not establish his or her ability, he or she will not receive positive evaluations thereby limiting his or her chance for promotion. The token is placed in an extremely difficult and ambiguous "catch 22" occupational context and is in many cases not given positions with the power or opportunity that is necessary for promotion. One other factor serving as a severe handicap for members of minority groups is that their status as a token eclipses any other

statuses which they might possess. This "master status" prevents necessary integration into the occupation by denying access to informal networks and defining him or her as different. Members of the dominant group feel that they cannot trust members of the smaller group because their orientation, beliefs, and characteristics differ from their own.

In an attempt to preserve and erect further boundaries, dominants often exaggerate their own culture to demonstrate the differences between themselves and the token group. These exaggerations of culture generally take the form of inside jokes, discussions of issues to which minority group members cannot relate, and various informal practices of which minority members are unaware. The more powerful group constantly demonstrates to the weaker group that great differences separate them, and that integration is both undesirable and impossible. In some cases the dominants accept tokens as members with the qualification that they are exceptions to their group type. These minority group members who are accepted by the majority group are forced to turn against their own group, and to prove their loyalty to the majority group through various loyalty tests. Those tokens who are not accepted into the dominant group are forced into isolation because they do not have large enough numbers to create a counterculture.

The "structural condition of relative numbers" serves to create occupational behaviors similar to the other two conditions of "Opportunity" and "Power". Members of the minority group are generally isolated, prevented from pursuing promotion, and generally denied equal treatment on the job. These conditions breed resentment, anger, frustration, and feelings of helplessness among those in the minority group. Tokens often respond to these feelings by isolating themselves further, becoming cynical, and expressing anger towards fellow employees and supervisors. In sum, Kanter believes that the structure of the organization must be changed in such a way that provides tokens with better opportunities, greater access to power, and greater occupational integration. Kanter further explains that the traditional lack of success experienced by women in nontraditional occupations is due to defects within the organizational structure and not due to their gender differences. Kanter has laid a foundation for the further analysis of organizational barriers which serve to prevent the success of female employees.

Nancy Jurik, in her article "An Officer and a Lady: Organizational Barriers to Women Working As Correctional Officers In Men's Prisons", (1985), explored the organizational barriers to women employed in male correctional facilities in the western United States. Jurik utilized the technique of open-ended interviews with a small sample of female correctional officers. Like Kanter, Jurik argues that the relative success of women in the field of corrections is a response to organizational factors and not simply due to individual characteristics. Jurik does not claim that the values and attitudes of the individual are not factors in determining the occupational success of the individual, but rather that one must synthesize these factors. Over time, employment

opportunities for women in male correctional facilities have improved, but women continue to face problems regarding occupational success and advancement. In most cases, male officers and supervisors blame the women's lack of success upon their supposed physical and emotional weaknesses, and their overpowering sexual identity. Jurik argues that the lack of success that characterizes female correctional officers may result from five organizational barriers embedded within the correctional institution. These five barriers are: 1. tokenism, 2. conflicting organizational goals, 3. external environmental conditions, 4. informal organizational structures, and 5. inadequate integration strategies.

Jurik's concept of tokenism is derived from the work of Kanter, previously discussed. Jurik claims that since female correctional officers represent such a small proportion of the correctional officer population, they are subject to a high visibility, intense scrutiny, and stereotyping. This increased visibility places additional pressures upon the female officer to perform her job without error because she knows that an audience of male supervisors and co-workers are monitoring her every move. The female officer is typically excluded from the informal culture of the male officers and is made aware of the differences that exist between herself and the male officers. The female officer begins her job with no credibility at all, whereas the male officer begins the job with some credibility simply because peers of his gender have already demonstrated their ability to perform the job. Female officers must work twice as hard as male officers to gain occupational credibility and recognition for their on the job accomplishments. Male officers often purposely assign female officers to undesirable tasks in an effort to test their dedication to the job, and to see if they can find her tolerance limit. New officers of both genders are subjected to a certain initiation procedure, but the initiation procedure for the female officers is more severe and lasts a great deal longer. Female officers have the dual responsibility of establishing their own credibility, and establishing the credibility of the female staff in general. When one female officer fails, it reflects on the whole population of female officers. Those officers who do achieve credibility are generally defined as exceptions, and their achievements are not generalized to the population of female officers. Tokenism serves to make the job much harder for female officers in terms of limiting their opportunity for promotion and thus success. Regardless of their individual traits, the organizational structure of relative numbers serves to limit or prevent the success of females employed in corrections.

"Conflicting organizational goals" is another organizational factor which serves to limit the success of female officers employed in male correctional institutions. Prior to the 1970's, the primary goal of the correctional institution was the maintenance of custody. Beginning in the 1970's, the goal of rehabilitation was introduced to the correctional institution, and was synthesized with the prior goal of custody. Many times the methods of achieving the goal of rehabilitation conflict with the methods of maintaining custody. This situation placed the whole

correctional staff in an extremely difficult position. In general, the male staff believed that the traits associated with the female gender were beneficial for the goal of rehabilitation, but these same traits were believed to be detrimental to the maintenance of security. Female officers have been met with open hostility and resentment from the male officers, and prevented from performing many tasks which are necessary for future promotion. In this way, conflicting goals have limited the success of females employed as correctional officers in male institutions.

"External environmental conditions" also have acted as a barrier to the success of female correctional officers. In recent years, the population of prisons has increased dramatically. This phenomenon coupled with a decrease in the number of correctional staff has forced the correctional institution to remove its prior emphasis upon rehabilitation and to concentrate upon custody related issues. A decrease in the overall number of staff has led the institution to assign female to positions formerly occupied by males. Although these female officers are assigned to these positions of custody maintenance, they continue to encounter discrimination and prejudice. Since the discrimination and prejudice may no longer materialize in the form of differential task assignment, it seems to manifest in poor evaluations and opportunities for promotion.

"Informal organizational structure" plays a important, yet hidden, role in limiting the success of female correctional officers. The correctional organization is a bureaucracy in terms of its formal rules, regulations, and policies. Yet, as in other bureaucratic organizations, there is an extensive informal network that has its own set of rules, regulations, and policies. These informal networks serve a variety of functions including the transmitting of information between staff, providing an outlet for occupational frustration, and serving to deal with the inconsistencies between policies that upper levels dictate, and staffs actual ability to enforce these policies. Female officers are denied membership into the informal networks in most cases. As a result, women are excluded from important job related information, frustration release strategies, and without an understanding of how to minimize the inconsistencies between policies and practices. Without these important resources, females are less prepared to perform their duties as officers, which may contribute to their low rates of promotion and poor evaluations.

The final organizational barrier identified by Jurik is that of inadequate integration strategies. Since women began to enter the occupation of female correctional officer in the late 1970's, no attempt has been made to implement an effective integration strategy. Correctional facilities have made no effort at training supervisors to deal with the unique problems that will face female officers other than the formal procedure for sexual harassment complaints. Without such integration strategies, the occupational sphere has become plagued with dynamics such as intimidation, resentment, aggression, and a general skepticism about the abilities of female officers. Accordingly, females have been forced to prove themselves both as individuals and as a

group to a resentful and resistant co-worker population. This situation is detrimental both to the career of the female correctional officer and to the efficient operation of the penal organization.

In sum, the relative success of women employed as correctional officers in male correctional facilities is determined by structural barriers, the individual prejudices held by male employees, and the unique characteristics of the individual female officers. The structural barriers serve to prevent women from receiving necessary occupational information, isolate women from informal occupational networks, and force women to work under conditions of extensive scrutiny and criticism. The prejudices held by male staff limit the opportunities given to the female officers and prevent them from receiving adequate job training. The unique characteristics of the female officer serve to shape the type of interaction they have with male staff, and to determine how much teasing and harassment they can handle before they reach their limit.

CHAPTER 4

COPING STRATEGIES UTILIZED BY FEMALE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

This chapter is a discussion/description of the recent literature on the topic of the coping strategies and role adaptation which characterize female correctional officers.

As described by (Sykes, 1966) the occupation of correctional officer is characterized by danger, ambiguity, discretion, monotony, unpredictability, and a lack of organizational power. The correctional officer is expected to preserve order, maintain security, and gain inmate compliance according to proper departmental procedures. This situation results in a great deal of ambiguity and frustration for the officers because in many cases, departmental procedures are not the most effective method of performing the tasks of the position. Officers are forced to develop their own coping strategies and occupational roles to both lessen the ambiguous nature of the position, and to enable them to perform their job in a comfortable yet professional manner.

In the first place, female officers must develop coping strategies and occupational roles to deal with these basic characteristics of their occupation. In addition, female officers tend to be also burdened with further problems such as harassment from co-workers and inmates, discrimination, and additional barriers to promotion that do not exist for the male officers. Therefore, each female officer must create a unique coping strategy and occupational role in response to the characteristics of the occupation and the problems she encounters due to her gender. The strategy she creates must be effective for the position and comfortable for her if she is to succeed as a correctional officer. Although there exists a wide variety of styles and roles, some attempts have been made at identifying ideal types. Three ideal type models in the literature are of interest.

Lynn Zimmer, in her study (1986), identifies one such model of occupational roles and coping strategies used by female correctional officers, to discover empirically three ideal types at work.

The first, known as the **institutional role** was adopted by 11% of the female officers. This role may be described as an adaptive strategy based upon closely following the formal rules that were taught at the academy and the formal rules of the correctional facility. These female officers tend to downplay the importance of their gender identity in all interactions whether it be with inmates, co-workers, or supervisors. These women simply ignore those people who oppose their employment, and continue to perform all of the necessary duties of their position "according to the book". Those utilizing the institutional role believe that they are as capable of performing the job as the male officers and they believe that they can use the identical techniques and behaviors used by the male officers. In some cases these women are accepted by the male officers as capable and dependable in the event of an emergency, but they are defined

as an exception to the other female officers. Those who adopt this strategy have additional characteristics as outlined by Zimmer (pgs. 111-122): These female officers...

- begin the job expecting to do the same job as male counterparts.
- respond well to emergencies, and use formal procedures to avoid later problems.
- stress the necessity of physical conditioning.
- stress consistency in the application of rules.
- can win approval of co-workers and supervisors.
- are typically not involved with feminist organizations.
- avoid informal socializing with male guards.
- stress occupational equality in all spheres of the occupation.
- don't see themselves as pioneers, but simply as employees performing a job.
- are frustrated by having to prove themselves every day.
- "go by the book" and lose essential circumstantial flexibility.
- make job more difficult for other women who do not adopt the institutional role.

The next ideal type role is termed the **Modified Role**. In Zimmer's study, 43% of the female officers utilized this role type. These female officers believe that they are unable to perform the job of officer on an equal basis with their male counterparts. Those adopting the modified role generally avoid contact with inmates, and tend to depend upon male officers when contact with inmates is necessary. These officers are sympathetic to the opposition expressed by male officers, and agree that their femininity may be detrimental to their ability to perform the necessary tasks of correctional officer. These females develop informal alliances with male officers who assist them and make sure that they remain on the job. Female officers adopting the modified role believe that there is a place for them in a male correctional facility, but in positions that are safe and removed from contact with the inmates. Zimmer includes these additional characteristics of those utilizing the modified role (pgs. 122-129): These women often...

- Express their femininity and avoid contact with inmates.
- believe women are not as capable as men for security due to their physical limitations and the inmates' right to privacy
- depend upon male officers to help them perform their duties.
- receive some harassment but not too much because they are not threatening to male officers.
- perceive themselves as valuable for filling positions that are suitable to them.
- do not support those who demand occupational equality of males and females.

The third and final type as suggested by Zimmer is termed the **inventive role**. Of the subjects she studied, 46% adopted this ideal type role. This role is an adaptive strategy based upon the belief that although females may be physically weaker than males, females make up for these differences with their strong intuition, good communication skills, and overall expertise at gaining inmate compliance. These officers see their female status as a distinct advantage to their ability to perform the job of correctional officer. They work on contact posts and tend to receive help and support from the inmates they supervise. These officers have little fear of inmates and

do not turn to male officers for assistance. These women are completely self-sufficient, but receive more harassment from the male staff than the other two ideal types. The females who adopt the inventive role use their creativity and intelligence as tools by which they can effectively perform the occupational tasks with the most success. Zimmer describes additional characteristics of the female officers who choose the inventive role (pgs. 129-137): They typically...

- work on contact posts, and prefer long term relationships with inmates.
- know each inmate as an individual.
- integrate counseling and custody.
- use compassion and listen to the problems of inmates.
- use traditional sex-role patterns
- often experience antagonistic relationship with male guards
- use discretion and flexibility
- must depend upon inmates for successful performance.
- attract those denied at modified role and those who reject the institutional role.

Another ideal type model is proposed by Susan J. Tilton Jones in her article "United If We Are To Stand" (1986). Tilton Jones identified three major strategies female correctional officers use to cope with their occupation. The three strategies are: "just one of the boys", "poor little me", and "the ice queen". In the first strategy, "just one of the boys", the female officer attempts to mimic the characteristics of the male officers. This mimicking behavior includes the use of vulgar language, pretending to be an expert on topics she knows nothing about, and a general attempt to look and sound aggressive or tough. Tilton Jones claims that this role is dysfunctional because females will never be socially equivalent to males, and this officer is subject to ridicule and harassment from fellow officers and inmates.

The second role which some female officers adopt is that of "Poor Little Me". Officers adopting this role are extremely dependent upon male officers and project an image of helplessness. In many cases, these officers succeed in remaining employed, but they are simply reinforcing the stereotypes and prejudices that male officers hold about female officers. The third role that some officers adopt is one entitled "The Ice Queen". This type of officer concentrates on performing her job "according to the book" while denying the need to gain social satisfaction from her occupation. The officers in this role type generally isolate themselves from the rest of the correctional officers and are viewed as conceited or as haters of the male gender.

The third and final ideal type model that has been suggested, is by Clarice Feinman in her book, Women In The Criminal Justice System (1986). In her discussion, she identifies three ideal types of female correctional officers. The first type, or the **traditionalist**, is a female correctional officer who subscribes to the traditional sex stereotypes of males and females regardless of their occupation. These women believe that there are appropriate positions for

women in male correctional institutions, but these positions are generally non-contact and safe. They feel that the pay for men and women should be equal but women should be kept out of dangerous positions because they are not as effective as the male officers. The second type, or the **integrationist**, strives to achieve the goal of equality. These women are convinced that women are suitable for the occupation of correctional officer, and they try to change discriminatory practices and prejudices. These women believe in equal pay for equal work in its fullest extent. The third and final type as discussed by Feinman is one called the **new professionals**. This group is newer to the field of corrections and is consequently unaware of the work it took to bring corrections to the equality of today. This group supports the equality movement, but does not pursue equality as fervently as do the integrationists. They take their ability to be employed in corrections for granted and are not interested in changing things other than issues of male hostility and harassment.

The three models discussed by Zimmer (1986), Tilton Jones (1986), and Feinman (1986) are only ideal types. Correctional officers develop many unique strategies and roles which are not as clear-cut and simple as the ideal types suggest. Whereas male officers are surrounded with possible role models, female officers are usually forced to develop their own roles without the guidance of a role model. A variety of factors influence the type of role a female correctional officer decides to choose. These factors include: the beliefs and attitudes the officer has prior to the job, the nature of her interaction with male inmates and male officers, the type of job training she received, and her own experiences on the job.

Prior to employment at a correctional facility, women are not able to choose a certain coping strategy or role type. The decision regarding which role to assume emerges as the woman learns more about the job and has experiences of her own. However, one significant factor that does precede actual employment is the gender orientation of the female. If a female is traditional in her beliefs regarding gender differences, she is more likely to assume a role that is consistent with these convictions. This role is typically one in which the female acknowledges that males are more capable of performing the job, and believing that only certain positions are appropriate for the female gender. As we have seen, this role has been named a variety of things: the modified role, "poor little me", and "the traditionalist". If a female is more liberal in her gender attitudes, she is more likely to assume a role based upon these liberal beliefs. Those possessing liberal attitudes generally assume a role that expresses their belief in equality and that their abilities are potentially the same as their male counterparts. In this case, the female may be forced to decide between two of the ideal types, one being more extreme than the other. Those on the less extreme end of the spectrum may choose a role similar to the Inventive Role or the New Professional Role. Those officers on the more extreme end of the spectrum may choose a role similar to the "institutional role or the "ice queen role" or the "integrationist role".

In sum, inadequate training, tokenism, gender stereotypes, lack of power, lack of opportunity, conflicting organizational goals, and informal organizational structures all serve to make integration and promotion difficult for the female officer.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS ABOUT FEMALE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS EMPLOYED AT THE WASHINGTON STATE PENITENTIARY IN 1989

This chapter describes/discusses the findings obtained from open-ended interviews with female officers and it attempts to relate these findings to the pertinent literature discussed in chapters three and four.

This chapter is divided into three sections based upon the three categories of questions which the interviewees were asked. The first category of questions was designed to examine the biographical and demographic backgrounds of the individual female officers. The second category of questions investigated the actual job-related experiences of the female correctional officers. The third category of questions was directed at the perceptions and beliefs the female officers held about the occupation, and the the future of female officers.

The quotes that have been included were taken from the actual interviews with female staff. Although the quotes reflect the testimony of the interviewees, some words have been changed or edited to protect the confidentiality of the subjects. In addition, the quotes were reformulated from my shorthand field notes which may result in some slight variation between the actual words of the interviewee and the words in quotes.

A. Biographical/Demographic Information

The purpose behind the first category of questions regarding the biographical and demographic backgrounds of female officers was two fold. First, it attempted to demonstrate that female correctional officers were not different from other women employed in the American workforce, and second, it sought to compare and contrast the backgrounds of the female officers among themselves.

Seventeen female correctional staff employed at the Washington State Penitentiary were interviewed in this study. Of the seventeen women interviewed, two were sergeants and fifteen were officers. The sample ranged between the ages of 23 and 51 with 54% of the subjects being between the ages of 33 and 36 years. The mean age of the sample was 35 years. In comparison, this sample of female officers had a mean age that was two years lower than that of the the general female officer population. In terms of race, sixteen of the seventeen subjects were white, and one was black. In comparison, the racial proportions of the sample are slightly higher for whites and slightly lower for blacks than the racial proportions of the female officer population.

Traditionally, the media and Hollywood have portrayed the female officer as "...an obese woman, with a hard scowl, walking around jail cells smacking poor innocent

murderers on the head and enjoying it" (Winslow, 1982). Various movies such as Papillon, Cool Hand Luke, and Chain Gang Women serve to reinforce the belief that correctional officers are "...bigoted, corrupt, brutal, and morally base"(Inciardi, 1987). These perceptions and beliefs about correctional officers are both inaccurate and unfounded. It has been suggested that the stigma attached to those employed in the field of corrections may be traced to historical times during which the prison was a barbaric institution staffed by masochistic guards. In the modern day, the stigma attached to correctional officers is wholly unfounded and I believe that such inaccurate beliefs must be challenged.

The prison staff has been divided into two categories, professional staff and custodial staff. The former includes medical, clerical, social worker, and religious personnel. The custodial staff includes the officers and their supervisors. An important step in the eradication of any negative stigma is the recent occupational title change of prison employees. Eight or nine years ago, those employed as custodial staff were referred to as guards, but since then, they have been titled correctional or custodial officers. This change in position title is extremely significant because it draws a distinction between those who worked in the inhumane institutions of the past and those who work in the professional institutions of the present day. In addition, the title of "correctional officer" suggests a certain professionalism that is an integral part of the occupation which has been ignored in the past. Most officers today are proud of their occupations as correctional officers, and are offended if referred to as guards.(I learned this the hard way!) In sum, the contemporary professional role of correctional officer is compares with other occupations in American society. Indeed, it and may even be safer than such occupations frequently seen as dangerous.

The women who participated in the study were similar to other women of their age and socioeconomic backgrounds. Of the seventeen females interviewed, nine were married and eight were unmarried. Five of the unmarried women had been divorced, which according to my knowledge, is phenomenon similar to women employed outside of the correctional system. In regards to children, thirteen of the officers had children and four did not. Again, single-parent households are also a common occurrence in modern American society according to my knowledge, and those unmarried female officers who had children are not different than those employed in other occupations.

One of my beliefs prior to research was that female officers were likely to have relatives employed at the penitentiary. More specifically, I assumed that many of the female officers were preceded by male relatives who had worked at the penitentiary. The term "male relatives" implies family members such as brothers, fathers, sons, boyfriends,

uncles, and husbands. In general, my hypothesis was supported by the officers who were interviewed. Of the seventeen officers, fourteen (82%) had relatives who were also employed at the penitentiary. In twelve of these fourteen cases (85%), the relative was a male who preceded the female officers' employment. I am not sure if this is the case for male officers as well. This phenomenon makes logical sense, in that the male relatives knew the workings of the penitentiary and were in a position to encourage their female relatives to apply for employment. In most cases, female officers felt that the existence of a male relative at the institution worked to their benefit.

"Since my ...(male relative) worked at the penitentiary for many years before my employment, I already knew many of the staff and they helped me a great deal."

"My ...(male relative) worked at the penitentiary before me and had established credibility with the male officers. It seemed that his credibility was generalized to me, and so I did not have many problems with staff on the job."

In a few cases, female officers felt that the existence of a male relative at the penitentiary was a detriment to their occupational experiences.

"Because my...(male relative) worked at the penitentiary, I was treated with extra caution. This special treatment was bad because I was not well prepared to do the job."

"My ...(male relative) worked on the hill before me and I was under a great deal of pressure to do my job without embarrassing him in the process. If he was not there, there would have been less pressure on me."

Over the course of the study, I was informed that many (both male and female) employees at the penitentiary have relatives who are also employed there. This occupational nepotism is most likely due to the limited size of Walla Walla and the lack of alternative high paying occupations in the area. It appears that overall, female officers believe that the employment of a male relative at the penitentiary acts as a positive influence upon their own employment experiences.

Another topic of interest concerns the career paths of the female correctional officers interviewed. Of the seventeen interviewees, only three had previous experience in occupations related to corrections such as police work, work with juvenile delinquents, or other types of security positions. The remainder of the officers were employed in traditional occupations or as a homemaker. It seems that in most cases, the decision to become employed in corrections was based on little or no prior experience in the field. This lack of related experience was a problem for some of the officers.

"I did not have previous experiences which prepared me for the job as did many of the male officers who had served in the military, so I had a lot more to learn than most of the males."

The majority (82%) of the females interviewed had only been employed at the penitentiary for between one and five years. In comparison, (83%) of the overall female population had been employed at the penitentiary for between one and five years. It is evident that females are relatively new to the occupation, but at the same time it is encouraging to see that women are being employed in increasing numbers.

There were a wide range of positions that the women held at the penitentiary. These positions included the mail room, living units in the medium unit, vacant post relief(V.P.R.), vacation relief, search and escort, sergeant, and living units in the maximum unit. These female officers performed an array of tasks ranging from inmate supervision to cell checks to working the towers.

B. Job Related Experiences of the Officers Interviewed

The next category of questions was designed to investigate the actual job-related experiences of the female correctional officers. The purpose behind these questions was the attempt to isolate trends and similarities among the experiences of the officers.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977), claims that males typically choose an occupation in response to the extrinsic rewards which it offers while females generally choose a job in response to its intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards include factors such as salaries, benefits, location, and the social status the occupation offers. Intrinsic rewards refer to opportunities for advancement, opportunities to better oneself, challenges, and the ability to learn new skills and ideas. Kanter's analysis is in terms of employees in managerial positions, and since female officers are not managerial, some discrepancies may exist. In the case of the female officers in my study, it seems that this theory does not hold true. Of the seventeen females interviewed, every one mentioned money as one of the top three factors in their decision to work at the penitentiary. More specifically, thirteen of the seventeen (76%) cited money as the primary factor in their decision. The second most common factor cited was the extensive benefits offered by a state job. The other factors mentioned included the convenient location of the penitentiary, that the penitentiary was the first full time job offered to them, and that the penitentiary offered good promotional opportunities. In sum, it may be noted that the majority of the officers felt that the extrinsic rewards were the most attractive aspect of the job, and the key factor that led them to seek employment there.

"It may sound awful, but the only reason I work on the hill is for the paycheck."

"Right now I have two kids to support, and this is the only job in town that pays the kind of money I need."

"Let's face it, I need to pay my rent, my utility bills, my car payments and many other things. I need a job that pays well enough to cover all of my expenses and this one is it."

"...In order to earn this type of paycheck I would have to work two separate jobs anywhere else in Walla Walla."

Some women expressed the importance of the benefits that the job offered.

"The state benefits associated with this job are much better than any other job can offer."

"This job offers the stability and benefits that I need to raise my two kids."

The officers were also questioned about the reactions of friends and family to their employment at the penitentiary. Those female officers who had relatives employed at the penitentiary were given excellent support and assistance.

"My husband was the one who suggested that I get a job at the penitentiary, so he was really supportive and understanding."

"My father used to work at the penitentiary, so he was afraid for my safety, but over time he accepted it."

However, in many cases, the children of the officers did not like the fact that their mother was working at a job surrounded by dangerous men.

"Every day before work my kids say to me 'be careful today mom'."

"At first my kids hated the idea of me working on the hill, but once the money I earned started to enter the household, they began to support me."

A majority of the officers reported that their friends could not relate to their employment at the penitentiary. Unless the female officer had a history of non-traditional occupations and activities, the friends thought that she was "out of her mind". Some officers reported that once their friends heard about the salary the penitentiary offered, they quickly changed their criticism and skepticism to support and understanding.

"Many of my friends told me that I was crazy, but once they heard about the paycheck, they quickly applied for employment."

In most cases, the families and friends of the female officers were initially concerned about her safety and her ability to do the job. Over time, after she proved that she was capable of surviving on the job the initial concern was changed to support and understanding. The key factor which caused this change in attitude was the excellent pay that the job offered.

The next area covered in the study was the job training that the officers received. Officers hired prior to May of 1988 were required to attend a two week training academy, and those hired after May of 1988 were required to attend a four week academy. At the academy, they were taught a variety of skills including physical techniques for dealing with violent inmates, frisking procedures, and verbal communication skills among others. At the academy, males and females were rated according to an identical scale (The academy is the only time in the career of the female officer when she is rated according to the same objective criteria as the male officers). Trainees were required to attend the entire academy, and then pass a comprehensive examination with a score above a certain minimum. At the end of the academy, every person had acquired a point total which had to be above a minimum in order to graduate. Almost all of the officers interviewed who had attended the two week academy complained that it was too rushed and that a four week academy would have been more desirable.

In the past, many officers at the penitentiary were hired and placed on line prior to attending the academy. Some of the officers interviewed were on the job as long as six months before they went to the academy. Employment prior to the academy was difficult for the officers because they were unprepared for the position, and because the academy taught them many skills and techniques that were never used on the job. In addition, those officers who worked on line before attending the academy, were under extreme pressure because if they did not pass the academy they would be automatically fired. More recently the policy has changed in that officers must attend the academy before they begin working on line. In general, the officers felt that the academy was not adequate preparation for the position of correctional officer, but it was important that new officers attend the academy before working on line. An interesting finding was that those officers employed on-line before going to the academy felt that it was less effective preparation than those who attended the academy before employment on line. Those who attended the academy after employment complained that the academy taught many skills that were not applicable to the position.

"At the academy, we were taught methods of dealing with inmates that were quite different than the methods actually used by officers on the job."

"The academy spent too much time training us about interaction with inmates and not enough time teaching us about interaction with male staff. I have had far more problems dealing with male staff than with male inmates."

"After leaving the academy, I expected to have all sorts of problems with the inmates. In reality, most of my problems have been with male officers."

Overall, the officers had three major complaints regarding the effectiveness of the academy. These included the lack of training for problems they would encounter with male staff, the discrepancy between the academies' portrayal of the penitentiary and the way the penitentiary really is, and the teaching of non-applicable techniques for dealing with inmates. Most of the women felt that they were not well prepared for the day to day realities of on line employment after graduating from the academy.

After graduating the academy, officers were given a two week orientation at the penitentiary. The officers had different perceptions about the effectiveness of the orientation period depending upon the senior officer to which they were assigned, and the area of the penitentiary to which they were assigned.

"My two week orientation on the hill was great. My senior officer was extremely helpful, and the unit I was assigned to was easy to learn."

"...The orientation was a nightmare. My senior officer ignored my questions or gave me false information. It was sort of a game each day as my senior officer would try to lose me fifteen minutes after I got to work."

"The orientation was too short. When it was over and I was put on line, I had no idea of what I was doing. I had to teach myself everything that I know today."

It seems that the two week orientation has the potential to be a helpful and important introduction to the job. Those officers who reported that the orientation was effective generally cited the importance of their senior training officer. Similarly, those women who felt the orientation was ineffective generally cited the negative qualities of their senior officer.

In sum, it appears that female officers believe that the academy should include more training on interaction between male and female staff, should teach communication techniques that are more applicable to the penitentiary, and should give women a more intensive introduction to the prison system. The women also stressed the

importance of a good senior officer during the two week orientation. These findings are consistent with the comments by Nancy Jurik (1985) regarding the lack of adequate organizational strategies to integrate the male and female staff. The female staff was not properly prepared to deal with resentful male co-worker, and the penal institution made no attempts at training the male staff to interact with the female officers in a professional manner.

An important distinction must be made in regard to equality in training. At the academy, males and females are given identical instruction and are rated according to an identical point scale. The two week orientation is more subjective in that their training is directly dependent upon their own senior officer. This discussion of equality in training is in response to the two week orientation through which all correctional officers must participate.

As far as equality in the training is concerned, a minority of the women claimed that the training they received was comparable to that given to the men.

"My orientation was no different than the orientation the male officers received to my knowledge."

"My on the job training was equal to the male officers who graduated from the academy in my class, but I have seen differences in the training of men and women from other classes."

"We(female officers) were given more attention, but overall the training was equal."

The other women explained that the training they received was not equal to that of their male counterparts, while some maintained that the training was superior, others reported that it was inferior. The following quotes demonstrate the impact of tokenism on their occupational experiences.

"I was given extra attention, good opportunities, and better assignments than the male officers." (Visibility)

"We (female officers) were given false information in an attempt to make us look stupid and incompetent." (Contrast)

"We (female officers) were babied by the males and not given as rough a time as the new male officers. This left us less prepared to do the job." (Assimilation)

"During my orientation, I was given harsher assignments than the new male officers in an attempt to break me."

This orientation period is significant for all new officers and it is important that they are prepared during this time for the positions they will occupy in the future. Most of the female officers reported that their orientations were not as effective as the orientation given to male officers. In order to create capable officers regardless of their gender, the two week orientation must be effective and equal for all new staff.

After the two week orientation, the officers begin their on-line employment under a six month probation. During this probation, the officers are not protected by the union or the official procedures for firing an employee. These factors create a large amount of pressure for the officer to perform the job without making any mistakes. During this period, the officers are subjected to extensive scrutiny and criticism from both their co-workers and their supervisors. This scrutiny and criticism takes the form of monthly performance evaluations as written by their direct supervisors and informal verbal criticism from their fellow male officers. I have been informed that this probation period exists in all state occupations, and is intended to remove inadequate employees before they are firmly established on the job. A majority of the female officers interviewed understood the significance of the period, but many complained of the extreme apprehension and stress during this time.

"The probationary period was extremely difficult for me because while I was trying to perform the job to the best of my ability, there were male officers constantly trying to screw me up."

"I created stress for myself during this period, I was really set on succeeding at this job and I was not willing to let anyone stand in my way."

*"The probationary period was no different than my subsequent employment except that there were more performance evaluations."
"Many times my male supervisors and co-worker would ask me 'are your six months up yet?' and this would make me feel nervous and apprehensive."*

The occupation of correctional officer is heavily dominated by males. Those females who choose to work as officers must interact with males on a day-to-day basis. The female officers who participated in the study were questioned about the nature of their interactions with male officers and how these have changed over time. A hypothesis (A) prior to the research was that female officers were likely to meet initial resistance and resentment from their male co-worker. I hypothesized that over time, this resentment and resistance would gradually fade, and the female officers would establish credibility and trust. The majority of women reported that their first two weeks on line

were by far the most difficult period in their career as female correctional officers. The most frequent complaints were regarding their interaction with fellow male correctional officers. Harassment, verbal abuse, ridicule, testing, and resistance were the most prominent aspects of their interaction with male officers.

"I was often the butt of the jokes and crude comments made by the male officers."

"Male officers constantly tested me to see if I would swim or float."

"Male officers called me a variety of names, some of which were okay, but others were crude and cruel."

"Many times male officers would say to me 'I would not let my wife work here' this made me feel angry and resentful because I had no choice but to be here."

"Guys would always harass me about my looks and the way I carried myself."

"When I needed an answer to a question, the males would often give me false information."

A few of the female officers claimed that in general, the male officers were supportive and helpful but even these females reported that they had met some resistance and hassles.

"Most of the guys were willing to answer my questions, and overall they treated me with respect."

"I had almost no problems at all with the male officers, but I watched them give many other females problems."

Many of the women interviewed identified four types of male officers: the "good ol' boys", the new male officers, the accepting males, and the supportive males. Each of these types interacted with the female officers in distinctive ways.

"Some of the male officers were open and honest. They said that they accepted my employment at the penitentiary, but they were not in favor of female being correctional officers. They behaved in a professional manner and were mostly pleasant to work with. Other male officers were supportive of my employment and helped me in any way they could. The new male officers generally began their employment in support of female officers, but after their probation was over, many became opposed to females. The good ol' boys were by far the most difficult to deal with. These guys were set in their opinion that women do not belong at the penitentiary in any position other than the visiting room or behind a typewriter. There is no way to change their beliefs, so I generally tried to avoid them."

Most of the problems that female officers encountered with male officers were due to the prejudices and biases that the individual males held. These males believed that the female officers were a threat to security, were incapable of dealing with violent emergencies, and were generally weak in body and in mind.

Most of the female officers reported that male supervisors were generally supportive and helpful. In a few isolated cases, the interviewees had problems with the male supervisors, but in general their interaction was of a positive nature.

When asked how their interaction with the male officers had changed over time, the female officers responses demonstrated a general positive trend. All of the officers reported that their interactions with male officers had improved since their first two weeks on line, but the degree to which their interactions had improved showed great variation. Those few female officers who had few or no problems with the male officers during the first two weeks continued to have few or no problems. Over time those officers who had initial problems generally gained more respect and received less harassment and testing.

"I have established a rapport with the male officers, and they treat me with respect. In fact, many of the male officers treat me better than they treat the other male officers."

"The male officers still treat me as an inferior, but things are better now than they were at first."

"I have demonstrated my abilities, and the fact that I am here to do the job and not to look for a husband. Now the males trust me and treat me as an equal."

"Most of the males who harassed me at first have toned it down, but I am still the butt of jokes and name calling."

"Those males who can be convinced that I belong here are now convinced, and those who have not been convinced never will be."

In general, the female officers have had good experiences with their male supervisors. There are a few, however, that continue to encounter problems with their supervisors. Most of these problems with supervisors tend to be personality conflicts that have nothing to do with the gender of the supervisor or the officer.

"I do not respect my supervisor and he does not like me. Many times he tries to exert his authority over me and makes my job difficult. I cannot wait to move to a new unit."

During the probationary period, the first two weeks in line, and the subsequent years of employment, the female officers were highly visible and subject to greater criticism than the male officers. This increased visibility and extensive criticism may be interpreted as a logical outgrowth of the tokenism dynamic as discussed by Kanter (1977) and Jurik (1985). Since the female officers represent a minority within a larger population, they attract the attention of the dominant group (males). Generally, this increased attention took the form of unnecessary criticism, harassment, and testing. These findings support my hypothesis that female officers encounter resentment, hostility and barriers when beginning their employment in male correctional facilities. The concept of tokenism may explain the resentment and resistance of the male officers in terms of "contrast". The male officers notice the qualities they have in common and their differences from the female officers. The male officers exaggerate their culture in an attempt to prevent the female officers from being integrated into their group. In addition, many of the males formulate generalizations about the female officer population and do not view them as individuals. When a female officer succeeds, the males define her as an exception to the rule, and often attribute her success to the Affirmative Action programs and not to her individual abilities. The female officers are often isolated and prevented from performing duties that are important to their future promotions. Ideally, the female officers should receive the same occupational experience as the male officers, and the amount of attention they receive should be no different than the attention the male officers receive.

In addition to interacting with male officers, women must also interact with fellow female officers. Although there are only 49 female officers at the penitentiary, there are many occasions during which females come in contact with one another. One of my hypotheses (C) prior to research was that the female officers would bond together in response to their shared problems and occupational experiences. The research only partially supports this hypothesis. Nine of the seventeen female officers interviewed claimed that in their first two weeks on line, there was support and assistance from the female officers who were already employed. The remaining eight officers reported that they received little or no support from the female officers already employed at the penitentiary. Those who received support from female officers made statements such as:

"I had a great deal of respect for the women employed on the hill before myself. During my first two weeks, they were the only group that I could turn to with my problems and questions."

"The female officers were the only ones who could really understand and relate to the problems I had at work. They offered me assistance and valuable advice."

"Without the help of some key female officers, I would never have survived my first two weeks on line."

Those female officers who did not receive support or assistance from the existing female officers made statements such as:

"I received more support and help from the male officers than I did from the female officers."

"The female officers already employed at the penitentiary had formed a clique that seemed difficult or impossible to enter."

"Women are women's worst enemies. The female officers expressed lots of jealousy about the attention I received from the male officers and began to spread rumors about me."

"The women on the hill ignored me and I was forced to turn to my male supervisors for support."

Over time, there was a major change in the type of interaction among the female officers. In fifteen of the seventeen cases, officers reported that a positive relationship between themselves and the other female officers had been established during their employment at the penitentiary. Many officers described the relationship between the female officers as a "bond".

"I have made some really good friends who act as a support group for me and the other female officers."

"There is definitely a bond among the female officers because we can all understand each others problems and concerns. We stand behind each other in times of need."

"There is some bond among the female officers, but I believe that it must be strengthened and structured."

The few women who claimed that the female officers still did not provide support or assistance for each other made comments such as:

"As a whole, the female officers at the penitentiary are characterized by jealousy and paranoia. There is no support given by these women, and I find them more difficult to work with than the male officers."

"The only contact that I have with other female officers is at roll call, and this is not enough time to get to know them."

It seems that the female population as a whole assumed the form of a "skewed group" during some of the female officers' first two weeks on line. The new women were the minority and the established women were the majority. The new female officers, or the tokens in this context, were subject to scrutiny and criticism from the established female officers. The established female officers created boundaries that separated themselves from the new female officers and many times refused to allow the new officers to integrate into the group. It is important that the female officers work together to provide support for one another and to make entry into the occupation easier for future female officers. As stated by Susan J. Tilton Jones (1986), "A support system among female officers must be developed either formally or informally to communicate needs and frustrations." She continues "...as female officers begin to defend and accept each other, it will be easier for male staff to accept them as people and officers." And she concludes "Through the use of group support, women can succeed in this male-dominated profession, but we must be united if we are to stand." Some of the female officers interviewed mentioned attempts that are currently being made to form a female officer support group, but as of yet, none exists. These women face similar occupational problems and if they do not work as a unit, they will be forced to battle the system as individuals.

C. Perceptions and Beliefs of the Officers Interviewed

The first question in this section asked the officers if they felt that their ability to perform the tasks of a correctional officer was different from the ability of a male. In fourteen of the cases, the women believed that their ability to perform the job were equal to those of the male officers except in terms of physical strength. In general, the female correctional officers reported that they were as effective as the male officers in terms of performing the job. Female officers reported that they used techniques to perform the job that were different and sometimes superior to the techniques used by male officers. These techniques were all related to communication skills.

"It is difficult for a woman to use force or the threat of force as a strategy for gaining inmate compliance. Instead, female officers use verbal persuasion to get the job done."

"Women are physically weaker than men, but we possess communication skills that make up for our physical weakness."

"My use of fairness and consistency is far more effective at gaining inmate compliance than physical force."

"We (female officers) are able to deescalate a potentially violent situation with our intuition and our communication skills."

"Females are not a threat to the male ego, so we are able to deal with situations without threatening the inmates."

The communication skills utilized by the female officers may be viewed as a method of persuasion as opposed to a method of coercion. Women reported that inmates are not threatened by female officers to the same degree as they are threatened by male officers. Without this threat, females are able to enter a tense situation without causing further tension. Embarrassment is another technique used by many of the female officers. When males are placed in a penitentiary, they are in a sense stripped of their masculinity. In an attempt to preserve some of their masculinity, males often act aggressively towards each other and towards male correctional staff. There is a great deal of peer pressure on the inmates to appear masculine and flawless. The inmates are extremely conscious of this peer pressure, and many of the female officers use this peer pressure as a tool to gain inmate compliance.

"All I have to do is threaten an inmate that I will embarrass him in front of his peers, and he will do anything I ask."

"Inmates treat a female officer differently than they treat a male officer. When an inmate treats me in an inappropriate way, he often receives harassment from his fellow inmates."

This strategy used by female officers seems to be quite effective and desirable. It is possible that if male officers adopted a similar strategy, prison violence between inmates and officers might be reduced to a great extent. The old adage that "words can move mountains" is directly applicable to the techniques used by female officers. A few of the female officers believed that they were as physically capable as the male officers, and some believed that they were not able to perform the job of correctional officer as effectively as the male officers.

Along the same lines as the question regarding ability, officers were asked if they believed that males are better at dealing with violent emergencies. Eight of the seventeen respondents believed that males were more effective at dealing with emergencies due to their physical strength. The remaining nine officers believed that females were equally effective in emergencies due to their use of alternative techniques to physical force, and because they would most likely not be struck by an inmate.

"Males are typically larger and stronger than females and for this reason, they are better at dealing with emergencies."

"I do know the techniques to take down a 250 pound inmate, but I would not be as effective as a 250 pound male officer."

"Women are excellent at diffusing tense situations. In fact, a woman would be more effective in an emergency."

"98% of inmates would not hit a female due to the training they got as kids or due to the peer pressure to not hit a woman. This reality in addition to my communication skills would make me as effective at dealing with an emergency as any male."

Response to violent emergencies is only one of the many tasks which the correctional officer must accomplish. For the most part, the occupation is characterized by tasks that are not so exciting and physically demanding.

When asked about the most satisfying aspect of their job, many females responded with laughter and humorous answers. Nine of the seventeen interviews claimed that the most satisfying aspect was the paycheck they received. The other eight answers were generally about the sense of accomplishment that they felt after every day on the job.

"The job is challenging, interesting, and it offers great opportunities for promotion if I choose to do so."

"The most satisfying aspect of the job is the feeling of accomplishment, and knowing that I did my part to protect society and the inmates inside the walls."

"...That I can avert real possible disasters and dangerous uprisings."

"...When I leave work and know that I performed the job like a professional by being fair and consistent."

"When I gain respect as an officer from inmates and fellow officers."

The occupation of correctional officer provides many rewards besides the paycheck at the end of the month. This is an occupation which demands many skills such as common sense, creativity, and professionalism. Many of the officers who first reported that money was the most satisfying aspect of the job were sure to include the other aspects mentioned in the quotes above.

On the flip side of the coin, officers were asked about the aspect of the job that they disliked the most. The responses to this question were varied and did not demonstrate any overwhelming trends. The one trend in the answers that did exist was

that the female officers did not like having to prove themselves every day to males who were their occupational equals. These women were frustrated about having to work twice as hard as the male officers to gain respect and credibility.

"No matter how well I perform my job, I know that I am going to have to prove myself the next day at work to males that are my equals."

"Knowing that I have to work two times as hard as the male officers to gain the trust of my co-worker."

Other female officers complained about the inconsistencies and ambiguities of the orders handed down by the administration. Still yet others reported that the aspect of the job they disliked the most was the treatment they received from the male officers. Only a few officers cited dealing with inmates as a major dislike, and a few cited staff disharmony and the lack of opportunities for promotion.

"I hate having to deal with the inmates and their attitude problems."

"I am really bothered by the lack of communication between administration and the officers on line. The administration simply creates rules and regulations most of which are impossible to enforce."

"I really dislike the macho attitude of the male officers."

"I don't like the mind games that the male officers play with the women employees."

The complaints of the female officers generally took the form of constructive criticisms that could be improved. None of the officers felt that the negative aspects of the job were as numerous as the positive aspects.

The female officers were asked to describe the traits of an ideal female correctional officer. Many of the officers suggested similar ideal traits that a female officer should possess. These similarities included phrases and words such as common sense, self assurance, consistency, honesty, humaneness, and the ability to say "no" to inmates and staff.

"A female officer must be able to say 'no', to mean it, and to carry through with it."

"An officer must know who she is and she must be satisfied with herself because she cannot turn to anyone else for

approval."

"In order to gain respect and credibility, an officer must be firm but fair, and consistent but flexible."

"Most of the job is common sense, if you don't have that, you will not make it."

Other answers included characteristics such as open-mindedness, mental strength, a strong will, and self confidence among others. Obviously, the occupation of correctional officer demands a wide range of personal skills and abilities of which the general public is unaware. An additional question which some of the last interviewees were asked was "Is there an ideal age for a female correctional officer?" In general the officers claimed that the level of maturity of the female was important, but that officers between the ages of 30 and 45 years were ideal. The reasoning behind these ages is that officers in this age group are usually married, usually have children and are not a sexual target for the male officers. In addition, women at this age know who they are and where they are going and thus they will be a stable and reliable employee. The officers felt that women in their twenties were too young and inexperienced and that they did not know themselves well enough.

In terms of task assignment, all of the women reported that they were assigned to the same tasks as the male officers. The only positions that the females did not fill were those designated as Bona Fide Occupation Qualifications (B.F.O.Q.). The most prominent positions protected by the B.F.O.Q. were those at the intensive management unit (I.M.U.), those in segregation, and those of feces watch among others. The history and legal context of the B.F.O.Q. provision was discussed in the introduction of this report. The task assignment system at the penitentiary is based upon an objective seniority scale. Officers turn in requests for the posts and hours that they want, and those with the highest seniority (years at the penitentiary) get the first pick. In this way, differential task assignment is not even an issue for the female officers employed at the Washington State Penitentiary.

When asked if women should be able to work any of the positions that men work including the B.F.O.Q. exemptions, the officers gave a variety of answers. Eleven of the seventeen officers (64%) reported that the issues of inmate privacy and danger were not sufficient justification for denying them certain positions. These eleven women believed that they should be able to work all of the B.F.O.Q. positions.

"I don't believe that the inmates right to privacy should stand in the way of me doing a certain post. I should be able to work in I.M.U. and in segregation because they are

not much different than other positions that I can do."

"I think that women should be able to work in all of the same positions as males. I believe that I.M.U. is safer than even the medium security unit because all of the inmates have restricted movement and restricted access to officers."

The remaining six officers reported that women do not belong in the B.F.O.Q. positions due to the issues of inmate privacy and the threat of violence.

"The positions in segregation and out at I.M.U. are restricted to male officers for good reasons. I do not belong out there, and I don't believe any women does for that matter."

"Female officers should hold the same positions as males unless the position is with inmates who are undressed or extremely violent."

"Inmates are humans and deserve some privacy. Women should not be in positions where there is a lot of inmate nudity."

What is the purpose behind applying the B.F.O.Q. exemption to the field of corrections? It makes sense that the B.F.O.Q. is used for occupations "... where it is necessary for the purpose of authenticity or genuineness, e.g., an actor or an actress" (Zimmer, 1986). The B.F.O.Q. was designed to be used in situations where it was factually proven that a certain gender was necessary for the position. It was not designed to be used in situations that were based upon gender stereotypes, co-worker preferences, or simple prejudice. When the Supreme Court decision was made in regard to the Dothard v Rawlinson case, no factual evidence existed to prove that females were not capable of being full blown correctional officers. So why do the current B.F.O.Q. exemptions continue to exist in corrections? Until this day, no study has documented the fact that female officers represent a security risk. In fact in one study of a California prison, it was shown that female officers were assaulted less often than men. In addition, this study demonstrated that when assaulted, the injury level for male and female officers was equal (Shawyer & Dickover, 1986). Between the entry of women into the field of corrections and May 15, 1981, only one female officer has ever been killed while on duty in a male correctional facility (Feinman, 1986). The woman killed was officer Donna Payant who was employed at the Green Haven Correctional Facility in Stormville New York. She was also the first officer to be killed in the line of duty since the 1971 Attica Prison Riots. I was not able to find any studies similar to that by Shawyer and Dickover, but the information that does exist demonstrates that females are not less capable than males nor are they a greater threat to security. An additional concern regarding the employment of

women in male correctional facilities is that of inmate privacy. Although inmates are not formally guaranteed privacy during their incarceration, there are many administrators that feel that inmates deserve some privacy. In the California penal system, female officers are assigned to all of the same positions as the male officers. Some attempts have been made at protecting inmate privacy without creating a security risk, and overall these attempts have been successful in California. It appears that the only reasoning behind the establishment of B.F.O.Q. exemptions in the correctional system is in terms of prejudice and biases against those of the female gender.

The results in this section reinforce Kanter's thesis regarding the access to opportunity and power of token minorities. At the Washington State Penitentiary, officers are assigned to positions through the use of an objective assignment strategy that is based solely upon seniority. Officers request ("bid") for certain positions and hours, and those with the highest seniority get the first pick of positions and hours. In terms of opportunity, the female correctional officer has access to the same amount of formal opportunity as do her male counterparts. Where a difference in access to opportunity does exist is in the informal structure of the organization. The position of correctional officer is characterized by little or no access to formal opportunity for either the male officers or female officers. The occupation does not offer many alternative career paths, and the promotional opportunities are quite limited. The informal opportunity structure refers to the training and performance evaluations that the officers receive. As reported by the females interviewed, their training is not always equivalent to the training given to the male officers. This differential training serves to limit the female officers in their ability to perform their job effectively, thus negatively affecting their performance evaluations. Informally, it seems that the female officers must work twice as hard as the male officers to establish their credibility and to gain respect for their occupational abilities. In this way, female officers have less access to opportunity than the male officers.

In regards to occupational power, the position of correctional officer is characterized by virtual powerlessness. Correctional officers are not endowed with the ability to direct their subordinates because there are no subordinates to direct. In addition, the position is subject to extensive intervention from all staff who are higher on the hierarchal ladder. Those higher on the ladder include sergeants, lieutenants, captains, the superintendent, and the Department of Corrections. As in the access to opportunity, the power that male and female officers hold is identical in regard to the formal structure but unequal in regard to the informal structure. Informally, male officers are in a position of greater authority than the female officers. This may be due to greater length

of time they have been employed at the penitentiary or due to the stereotypes about the female gender which makes women less powerful. Male officers exclude female officers from informal networks and often limit their opportunities to do tasks which are dangerous in nature. This informal power that the male officers hold is used to prevent female officers from performing to their potential. Male officers are more powerful in the informal structure because they are able to exercise their authority over the female officers, whereas the female officers have no subordinates over which they can exercise authority.

The next question addressed in the interviews was regarding the expression of femininity on the job. The majority (95%) of the female officers reported that they believed that female officers should not hide their femininity.

"I don't believe that female officers should hide their femininity, but they should not flaunt it either."

"Makeup and conservative jewelry are part of me, and I don't think that they are any different than a male shaving his face."

"Female officers should not wear flashy jewelry or excessive makeup, but some jewelry and makeup is okay."

"Officers should be themselves on the job and if makeup is part of them, they should wear it."

"If a woman wears no makeup or jewelry and acts like a male, she will have far more problems than if she is herself."

"...Act as an officer first and do not overemphasize your femininity."

A few of the officers believed that jewelry and makeup made it more difficult to establish credibility with the male staff. These women either never wore jewelry and makeup or they established their credibility and then wore these things. Others felt that makeup and jewelry should be worn as part of an officers person and not as a demonstration of their sexuality. In terms of a dress code, officers should wear identical uniforms so that their status as an officer takes precedence over their status as a male or female.

Related to the earlier question about what the officers disliked most about the job was the question regarding the most difficult aspect of the job. Most of the women felt that the most difficult part of the job was interaction with male officers. The most frequently cited problems were having to prove themselves and coping with harassment or resistance from the male officers. Some additional difficulties mentioned were

smoothing out the inconsistencies in orders from the upper ranks and trying to gain promotions.

"The most difficult aspect of the job was proving to the male officers that I was at the penitentiary to simply do the job and not to find a husband or to pack drugs to inmates."

"The most difficult part is trying to smooth out the inconsistencies in the orders that we are supposed to carry out. The administration makes rules that we cannot enforce so we have to use our discretion."

As one would expect, the aspects of the job that the officers felt were most difficult were also the aspects of the job that the officers disliked the most.

When asked if they believed that most women could do the job of correctional officer, nine officers replied "yes" and eight officers replied "no". In general, both answers were qualified with additional remarks about the traits that women need to possess in order to do the job.

"Most women could do the job if they were self-motivated, self secure, intelligent, and competent."

"If a woman has guts and common sense, she can definitely do the job."

"Most women cannot do the job because they lack the mental strength and the self awareness the job requires."

"I don't think that many women can do my job because it requires a certain open-mindedness and mental stability."

It appears that the occupation of correctional officer demands a variety of abilities and innerpersonal strengths. Although some of the women reported that most other women could not do their job, I think that they were speaking of women who did not have the same skills they had. The position of officer is not one which all people are capable of doing.

When asked if the male officers now treat them differently than the way they treat fellow male officers, twelve of the seventeen women interviewed said "yes". These twelve officers reported that the male officers gave them respect and treated them with courtesy. The term courtesy refers to behaviors such as opening doors for them, refraining from vulgar language when they were present, and generally treating them "like a lady".

"After I had been on the hill for a while, I could walk into

a conversation and the males would make an effort at refraining from vulgar language and off color jokes."

"Most of the guys treat me ten times better than they treat the male officers. They open doors for me and try to treat me like a lady."

"In general, the male officers respect me as an officer and try their best to make me feel comfortable."

On the other hand, three of the female officers reported that the male officers treat them no differently than they treat the other male officers. These women feel that they must be accepted by the male officers as a peer because their treatment is the same.

"Now that I have established my credibility as an officer, the males treat me as if I were one of the boys."

"The male officers treat me with respect, but they cuss around me just as much as they do around each other. In a way this makes me feel like I am a part of the group."

Two of the female officers claimed that the males treated them much worse than they treated their fellow male officers. These women continued to encounter harassment and resentment even after they had been employed for as long as three years.

"The male officers treat me as if I am totally helpless. Compared to the way they treat the other male officers, I am treated like dirt. They ignore my presence and they even start rumors about my relationships with the inmates."

"I don't know if the male officers will ever treat me well. No matter how well I do my job, I am still harassed and made fun of."

A majority of the female officers report that their interactions with male officers have improved over time, but most still claim that they must prove themselves every day on the job. One point that was raised in many of the interviews was the importance of age in terms of how the males acted toward female officers. In general, the younger officers received the most harassment and resistance while the older officers were more easily accepted and respected. The reason for this difference in treatment is that the younger officers are a threat to the older female officers, and are a focus of sexual attention for the male officers.

Ten of the seventeen females interviewed reported that their opportunities for promotion were not equal to those offered to the male officers. Most of the women claimed that the opportunities for advancement were not equal because they had to work

harder and longer than a male to obtain a promotion. The seven women who believed that their opportunities for advancement were equal to or better than the opportunities for male officers generally cited the power of Affirmative Action. These women believed that the chance for promotion was good because they were female and not because they were capable employees. Although the penitentiary operates on an objective system of promotion and task assignment, a great deal of emphasis is placed upon the performance evaluations completed by direct supervisors. These evaluations are sometimes abused in an attempt to prevent women from advancing or promoting to other positions. In effect, an informal network still exists to some extent in regard to the ability of an officers to obtain promotions and occupational advancement.

One of the most significant findings of this study was in regard to the interaction between male inmates and female officers. All of the females who participated in the study reported that their interaction with the male inmates was generally of a positive nature. Almost all of the officers stated that the inmates play games with them, but overall they show respect and concern for the female officer. It seems that once the officer is established as consistent and fair, she will have few further problems with the inmates.

"The inmates are much easier to deal with than are the male officers. They treat me with respect, and they understand that I am there to do my job and then to go home."

"The inmates are constantly testing me to see where my limits are, but overall I get along with them great."

"If I treat them (the inmates) with respect, they always return the respect."

"As long as I am consistent, firm, and fair I have no problems with them at all."

In general, it seems that the female officers have few or no problems with the inmates. Most of the officers were sure to point out that the inmates did tease them and make crude remarks at times, but these things were petty and unimportant. The female officers felt that they were in a great position to deal with the inmates because there was no clash of the male ego's. The women in the study reported that their use of persuasion rather than coercion was a key factor in the positive experiences they had with inmates.

When questioned, the majority of females felt that the occupation had changed their view of themselves in many ways. The three most common responses were similar to these:

"Going through the academy and being employed on the hill has given me more self confidence and has showed me that I can think and act as effectively as any male."

"I am definitely harder and harsher. When I say no, I really mean it, whereas before my employment on the hill, people would walk all over me."

"I am both more aggressive and more cautious when I am on the street. I know what kinds of people are inmates at the penitentiary, and I know that there are many of them in Walla Walla."

It must be noted, however, that a few of the women said that the job did not influence their view of themselves at all.

"It is just a job to me. I go to work, give my eight hours and go home. The job really has not changed me at all."

It seems that employment at the penitentiary allowed a large portion of the officers to see their hidden potentials and abilities. In a sense, it helped many of the officers grow as people and learn how to deal with people whether they be inmates or fellow officers.

As indicated in many discussions I have had with correctional staff and administrators, the relationship between the Walla Walla community and the Washington State Penitentiary has been tenuous at best. In the past there have been a few correctional officers who have caused problems in the community whether they be drunken brawls in taverns or pranks such as directing traffic in their penitentiary uniforms. It was reported that although the penitentiary brings vast sums of money into the Walla Walla community, the penitentiary and its employees are still stigmatized and given bad press. For example, the media in Walla Walla, namely the Walla Walla Union Bulletin, has continued to give the penitentiary and the people employed within it bad press. This point is demonstrated by the following scenario describe by a few officers: When an employee of the penitentiary engages in some type of unacceptable behavior such as marrying an inmate, the media is sure to point out not only the name of the individual but also the fact that he or she is employed at the penitentiary. On the flip side of the coin, the media neglects to include the fact that an individual is employed at the penitentiary when he or she is engaged in some type of positive behavior. For example, recently when two officers saved the life of a drowning boy, they were cited in the Walla Walla Union Bulletin by only their names and not by their status as employees at the penitentiary. Similarly, when Mary Lou Whalen (mentioned before) gave a presentation at Whitman College for the Pacific Northwest American Studies Association,

she was cited in the paper as a Whitman student and no mention was made of her employment at the penitentiary.

Many of the females interviewed reported that they were embarrassed to tell people in the community that they were employed at the penitentiary. A few spoke of funny looks they received when applying for loans and degrading comments people made when they were informed that the female was employed at the penitentiary.

"When I tell people that I work at the penitentiary, their first question is always 'aren't you scared to work there?' With only a few exceptions, I receive support from the community."

"Whenever I apply for a loan or a bank account, I receive funny looks from the person helping me. They seem surprised that I work at the pen, but they really don't give me much trouble."

On the whole, the female officers claimed that they did not have problems with the community in regard to their employment at the penitentiary. It seems important that those who are employed at the penitentiary receive the respect and credit they deserve. They are professional people who simply work with the outcasts of society. Some of the officers reported that attempts are under way to better their reputation with the Walla Walla community through some fundraisers and community activities. Hopefully correctional officers will receive the respect and credit they deserve in the near future.

When asked what they believed the future held in store for the employment of females in corrections, many officers replied that it will be a "long hard road". Of the seventeen officers interviewed, fourteen believed that the number of female employees would never reach the number of male employees.

"Women will never be employed on the hill with the same numbers as the male officers, but they will continue to grow in numbers."

"We (female officers) are an important part of the staff at the penitentiary, but we will never have numbers equal to the men."

The officers claimed that the future of women in corrections was dependent upon four pivotal factors: 1. the continued existence of the Affirmative Action Plan, 2. the implementation of better training and integration strategies, 3. better selection of female employees, and 4. the abolishment of prejudice and discrimination toward the female staff.

"If women are going to succeed as officers, they must be given good training and assistance from the administration."

"There should be more women on the hiring board, because female officers are better than anyone else at choosing potential female officers."

All of the women believed that there is a place for women in the correctional system, and that the presence of women has a calming effect on the inmate population.

In conclusion, it appears that the organizational barriers discussed by Kanter (1977), Jurik (1986), and Zimmer (1986) were all encountered by the women employed at the Washington State Penitentiary in 1989. The female officers were all subject to the dynamics associated with Tokenism such as high visibility, contrast, and assimilation. Informally, female officers were characterized by a lack of access to opportunity, and a lack of organizational power within the penal bureaucracy. The structural conditions of: 1. Conflicting Organizational Goals, 2. External Environmental Conditions, 3. Informal Organizational Structures, and 4. Inadequate Integration Strategies were all applicable to the female correctional officers employed at the Washington State Penitentiary. These structural conditions at the penitentiary in conjunction with the individual characteristics of the female officer determine whether or not a woman will succeed in her employment at the penitentiary. These structural conditions serve to make occupational success more difficult for female officers which may account for their small numbers and low rates of promotion. Ideally, I believe that all of the officers should be given an equal opportunity to perform the job of correctional officer, but in the present day this is not the case.

CHAPTER 6

COPING STRATEGIES AND ROLE ADAPTATION OF FEMALE OFFICERS EMPLOYED AT THE WASHINGTON STATE PENITENTIARY

One of the most difficult tasks of this study was the attempt to identify and categorize the different occupational roles and coping strategies adopted by the female officers. The women interviewed were not asked to identify the specific role or coping strategy that they adopted. Rather, I examined the individual responses of the officers and categorized them into different roles depending upon the information they provided over the course of the interview. In categorizing the different roles, I referred to the ideal types suggested by Lynn Zimmer, Susan Tilton Jones, and Clarice Feinman. In review, the ideal role types suggested by Zimmer were: the **institutional role**, the **modified role**, and the **inventive role**. Tilton Jones offered the following ideal type roles: "**the ice queen**", "**poor little me**", and "**just one of the boys**". Clarice Feinman discussed: **the traditionalist**, **the integrationist**, and **the new professionals**. These ideal types were described in depth in Chapter 4 of this project.

Ideal types are useful tools in categorizing and organizing information, but they have numerous limitations. In the real world, individual humans have a wide range of idiosyncrasies which make it difficult to categorize them into groups or types. In order to categorize humans, one must search for the important characteristics they have in common, and neglect the unimportant idiosyncrasies they possess. This study was an attempt to collect and present rich information about female correctional officers which makes categorizing them into ideal types extremely difficult. For the purpose of analysis, I did categorize the female officers, but it must be noted that no individual officer can be adequately described by a single ideal type. The ideal type does not work in cases where the officer had characteristics that overlapped between the various ideal types. For example, an officer who felt that she could perform the job as effectively as a male might also report that she does not believe that women belong in contact positions. In cases such as this, I generally focused on the major trends that became clear as the officer answered the questions.

The officers were assigned an ideal type in response to their answers to the following interview questions:

- 1) What is the nature of your current position? Contact?
- 2) Describe your probationary period at the Penitentiary.
- 3) Describe the nature of your reception/interaction by/with your male supervisors

- and your fellow male officers during your first two weeks on line. How has it changed over time?
- 4) Describe the the nature of your reception/interaction by/with your female supervisors and your fellow female officers during your first two weeks on line. How has it changed over time?
 - 5) Do you feel your ability to perform the tasks of a correctional officer differ from the abilities of a male officer? If yes, How so?
 - 6) What characteristics do you think an "ideal" female correctional officer should have?
 - 7) Are you assigned to the same tasks as the male officers?
 - 8) Do you believe that women should be assigned to the same tasks as men? I.M.U.?
 - 9) Should female officers hide their femininity, or should they use it as part of their way they deal with inmates and staff?
 - 10) Are male officers better at dealing with emergencies?
 - 11) Do you think that most women would be able to do your job?
 - 12) Do male officers treat you differently than they treat fellow male officers? If yes, How so?
 - 13) How do inmates tend to act toward you? Do inmates act differently toward male officers?
 - 14) Has being a correctional officer changed the way you view yourself? If so, how has it changed that?
 - 15) What do you see as the future for females employed in corrections?

The strategy used to categorize the officers was far from scientific. I used my knowledge about female officers, and the framework suggested by Lynn Zimmer to categorize the officers. In my model, I present three ideal type roles: "the mechanic", "the apprentice", and "the artist". These ideal types are similar to those offered by Zimmer, but they are also unique because they were formulated from my interpretation of the data gathered in my study.

"The mechanic" is the type of female officer who is assigned to the same positions as her male counterparts and uses the same occupational techniques as the males. I call this the mechanic role because this officer performs the mechanics of her job without any additional creativity or flexibility. She believes that the job requires masculine traits, and she does her best to downplay her female gender, and to act like a male officer. In regard to the my interview questions, this type of officer tends to demonstrate the following characteristics:

- 1) She occupies a contact post.
- 2) Her probationary period at the penitentiary was difficult, but she quickly established her ability to do the job in the same manner as the male officers.
- 3) At first, her interaction with male staff was strained. The male officers felt threatened by her abilities and aggressive attitude. Over time, the male officers began to treat her as an equal or as "One of the Boys". Her male supervisors respected her right away, and continue to respect her ability to do the job.

- 4) She had bad experiences with other female officers during her first two weeks on line, and over time she has been isolated and excluded by the other female officers.
- 5) She believes that her abilities to perform the tasks of a correctional officer is equal to the male officers, and she believes that she can use the same occupational techniques to perform the job.
- 6) This officer claims that the ideal female officer should be physically fit, aggressive, self assured, tough, and able to keep inmates in their proper place.
- 7) This officer is assigned to the same tasks as the male officers.
- 8) Additionally, this officer believes that women should be assigned to all of the same tasks as the male officers including those at I.M.U., Segregation, and Feces Watch as well.
- 9) She believes that the female officers should have a dress code identical to the male officers and that their femininity should be hidden as much as possible.
- 10) This woman believes that male officers are better at dealing with emergencies than most of the female officers, but are not better than herself and a few other women.
- 11) This officer does not think that many women are capable of effectively performing her job because they lack the masculine skills that she possesses.
- 12) Male officers treat this female as if she were a male officer. She takes part in telling of off color jokes, and the use of foul language.
- 13) She reports that inmates treat her no differently than they treat the male officers. This is due to her masculine traits and her aggressive nature.
- 14) This woman also claims that the job has not changed her view of herself in any important way. She views the job as just a job and nothing else.
- 15) In regards to the future, this officer believes that women will advance very slowly because there are simply not enough qualified women to do the job. She believes that the majority of women currently employed are incapable and ineffective.

Of the seventeen women interviewed, only three (18%) adopted this "mechanic role" according to my interpretation. This role is similar to the Institutional role discussed by Zimmer but it differs in two fundamental ways. First, the women adopting the mechanical role value contact with their male co-worker. In a sense, they regard themselves as peers, and value being treated as "one of the boys". Officers in the Institutional role as discussed by Zimmer, typically avoid contact with male officers and are often isolated from the male officers. Second, these women are more concerned with using techniques similar to the male officers than strictly following departmental policies as explained by Zimmer (1976).

The second role type that emerged from the study is that of "the apprentice". I title this role the apprentice because this officer plays a secondary role to the male officers. The apprentice is the type of officer who depends upon her male co-worker for support and assistance. She works in non-contact positions in the visiting room or in the control booths. She believes that there are certain positions that are proper for female officers, but those requiring constant contact with inmates are not appropriate for women. In terms of my interview questions, this officer demonstrates the following traits:

- 1) She is employed in non-contact positions.
- 2) Her probationary period was not too difficult because she was assisted by male co-workers.
- 3) This officer was liked by the male officers since her first day on line. Male officers were friendly, helpful, and cordial. Over time, her relationships have remained the same with the male officers and supervisors.
- 4) Her interactions with female officers were initially difficult, but in a short period of time she made friends. After her first two weeks on line, her relationships with female officers grew, and now she has a network of friends.
- 5) This officer believes that she is not able to perform the same tasks as the male officers due to her lack of physical strength and aggressiveness.
- 6) She feels that an ideal female officer should be honest, humane, feminine, able to give, and helpful.
- 7) This officer is not assigned to the same tasks as the male officers.
- 8) She does not believe that women should work in any of the positions defined as B.F.O.Q. exemptions such as I.M.U., segregation, and feces watch.
- 9) This woman feels that women should not hide their femininity because it is an integral part of her personality. She believes that her femininity is useful in establishing relationships with male staff.
- 10) She believes that male officers are better at dealing with emergencies due to their strength and large size.
- 11) This officer claims that many women can do her job as long as they are self-motivated.
- 12) Male officers treat this female as a "lady". They try to refrain from vulgar language in her presence, and they assist her in any way they can.
- 13) Typically, this officer does not have contact with inmates, but when she does, they treat her fairly well.
- 14) This woman believes that the job has made her more cautious in the general society, and it has made her feel that she is an important part of an organization.

- 15) She believes that there are a limited number of positions that are appropriate for women in the penitentiary, and that over time, women will be moved to these positions only.

Only two (11%) of the officers adopted this "apprentice role". They felt that it was their responsibility to do the work that was appropriate for their gender, and that they should allow the male officers to fill the other positions. This type of officer is similar to the modified role as described by Zimmer. Zimmer's description of the modified role is that of an officer who has informal alliances with male co-worker, has little or no contact with inmates, and who believes that only certain positions should be available to women.

The third and final role type that emerged from the study was that of "The Artist". I titled this role the artist because this type of officer uses her creativity and intelligence as tools to perform her job effectively. She works in the same positions as the male officers, but uses her own unique techniques to do the job. She believes that women are as effective as men in the occupation of correctional officer, but they must use different strategies than the male officers. This type of officer typically reported the following information:

- 1) She is employed in contact positions with the inmates and non-contact positions.
- 2) Her probationary period is characterized by extensive testing and harassment. This is a difficult time for her, and she must work hard to survive it.
- 3) This type of officer is initially met with resistance from the male officers. This resistance takes the form of verbal harassment, teasing, and testing. Over time this officer establishes her credibility with the male staff, but it takes time because her techniques are different from their techniques. Some officers of this type never establish positive relationships with the male staff, but this is mostly due to the individual personalities of the male officers.
- 4) This officer is not usually accepted by the other established female officers at first. Over time, she develops relationships with the other female officers whom she respects and trusts.
- 5) She believes that she is as effective at performing the job of correctional officer as her male counterparts. However, she performs the job by utilizing different techniques. The techniques that she uses are persuasive rather than coercive, and she uses her creativity and communication skills.
- 6) Her model of the ideal female officer includes traits such as honesty, a strong self-identity, consistency, humaneness, common sense, a desire to progress, open-mindedness, and self-sufficiency.
- 7) This officer is assigned to the same positions as the male officers.
- 8) She believes that women should be assigned to the same tasks as the male officers including those protected by B.F.O.Q. regulations.
- 9) This woman feels that female officers should not hide their femininity, but at the same time, they should not flaunt it. They believe that if jewelry and makeup are

a part of an officers' person, they should be free to wear them. Excessive jewelry and makeup are considered to be inappropriate and dangerous by this officer.

- 10) She thinks that women are as capable or more capable of dealing with violent situations because they do not threaten the male ego of the inmates. Additionally, she feels that most inmates would not strike a woman.
- 11) In general, she feels that most women would be able to do her job, but they must have some or all of the traits in her description of the ideal female officer.
- 12) Male officers treat this woman differently than they treat their fellow male officers. In general, she is treated with courtesy and respect. Sometimes this woman experiences problems with certain individual male officers, but she tries to avoid them to the best of her ability.
- 13) In most cases, inmates treat this woman with respect. She develops a relationship with the inmates she supervises, and they often assist her and make her job easier. Occasionally, these officers have problems with inmates, but these are usually resolved without the use of formal procedures and punishments.
- 14) This woman feels that her employment at the penitentiary makes her feel more capable, gives her more character, makes her more aggressive, and gives her more self-confidence.
- 15) This officer believes that women belong in the position of correctional officer, and that there is a great potential for their future. She feels that a lot of progress has been made in the employment of female officers, but there is a long, hard road ahead.

Of the seventeen officers interviewed, twelve (71%) adopted "The Artist" Role. These officers believed that they were as effective as the male officers, but they used different techniques of performing the job. They felt that their femininity was part of their personality and that it should be neither hidden or flaunted. This artist role is similar to the inventive role suggested by Zimmer. Zimmer's depiction of the inventive role is that of an officer who effectively performs the job by using her communication skills and her non-threatening demeanor to deal with inmates and fellow male officers.

I developed my own ideal type model for three main reasons. First, the questions which I asked the female officers were different from those asked by Zimmer in her study. Second, my subjective interpretation of the information that the female officers provided was different than Zimmer's interpretation of the officers that she studied. Third, the ideal types that emerged in my study were not identical to those suggested by Zimmer, so I was compelled to develop my own typology. My typology does demonstrate numerous similarities to Zimmer's model, but at the same time, it is oriented to the individual officers that participated in my study, and my own subjective interpretation of their responses.

In addition to the interview questions, the female officers were asked to complete the Bem sex role inventory (Bem, 1972). The inventory is composed of sixty words which

the subject scores on a scale of one to seven according to how well the word describes her. In order to avoid confusion and to insure consistency, I asked the female officers to rate the words in terms of how well they described her as a correctional officer. Some of the words on the inventory were considered to be feminine in nature and some of the words were considered to be masculine. A masculine word is one which symbolizes the traits traditionally associated with the male gender. These traits include aggressiveness, independence, self-sufficiency, and strength, among others. A feminine word is one which symbolizes the traits traditionally associated with the female gender. These traits include nurturance, compassion, gentleness, weakness, and dependency, among others.

To score the inventories, one simply adds up the responses to the "feminine" words, adds up the responses to the "masculine" words, subtracts the "masculine" score from the "feminine" score, and multiplies this figure by 2.322. "If the result is greater than 2.025, the person is sex-typed in the feminine direction. If it is smaller than -2.025, the person is sex-typed in the masculine direction. BEM considers a score between 1 and 2.025 to be 'near feminine' and a score between -2.025 and -1 to be 'near masculine'. A score between -1 and 1 means the person is not sex-typed in either direction: he or she is androgynous" (Bem, 1972). Recent studies have demonstrated that women who are employed in non-traditional occupations are somewhat different from the greater population of females. In one study (Fitzgerald, 1976), it was found that the more masculine the occupation, the higher female employees scored on the masculinity and androgyny measures.

Of the seventeen women interviewed, two declined to fill out the inventory. The scores were as follows:

1) -.9 {androgynous}	6) -3 {masculine}	11) -7 {masculine}
2) +1 {near feminine}	7) -3 {masculine}	12) -5 {masculine}
3) -3 {near masculine}	8) -5 {masculine}	13) -5 {masculine}
4) -1 {androgynous}	9) -3 {masculine}	14) -5 {masculine}
5) -5 {masculine}	10) -3 {masculine}	15) -3 {masculine}

It is apparent that the majority of the women which I interviewed were gender-typed in the masculine direction. These results are not surprising because the occupation demands "masculine skills" such as aggressiveness, self-reliance, efficiency, and strength. My hypothesis prior to actually conducting this research was that the females who ranked high in masculinity would adopt roles that were consistent with this orientation, and that females who ranked high in femininity would adopt roles that were consistent with this orientation. My hypothesis proved to be only partially true.

The three female officers who I categorized as "The Mechanics" (the most masculine role type) had scores of -5, -7, and -5 respectively. Although these women demonstrate an orientation toward masculinity, their scores did not differ greatly from those of the "Artist" role type. "The Artists" (the androgynous role type) had scores of -3, -1, -5, -3, -3, -5, -3, -3, -5, and -3. (Two of the interviewees who were categorized as "Artists" did not complete the inventory!) The two officers categorized as "The Apprentice" (the most feminine role type) had scores of -.9 and +1. These findings only partially support my hypothesis. While no significant difference existed in the scores of the mechanics and the artists, there was a difference in the scores of the apprentice. The scores demonstrated by the apprentice suggest that those officers who rank high in femininity choose a role that is the most inherently feminine.

This portion of the study regarding role types and the relative significance of sex-role orientation scores seems to have some major weaknesses. First, the assignment of officers to different categories or role types was based upon my subjective interpretation of the information the female provided in the interview. It is possible that my interpretations are incorrect, and the officers do not belong in the categories to which I assigned them. Second, I modified the Inventory in an attempt to gain consistency in the answers of the officers. I asked the officers to rate the words according to how well they described the woman as an officer. This manipulation may have damaged the reliability of the Inventory. Third, ideal types are useful tools for organizing information, but many times a researcher must sacrifice important information about the individuals in his attempt to type them. Many of the officers demonstrated qualities that were present in all three ideal types, but I looked for the most prominent qualities and neglected the less significant information. I hope that the discussions in previous sections of this project make up for the oversimplified portrayal of the officers in this section.

I have been informed that many researchers question the inherent credibility of the Bem sex role inventory on the basis that it is not possible to isolate masculinity from femininity by simply using a word-rating strategy. Additionally, these researchers criticize the inventory on the grounds that gender roles are gestalt, and are much more than statistical bundles of symbolic words. In other words, one must examine a more encompassing indicator of gender roles rather than separating the indicator into isolated parts.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The historical background of women employed as correctional officers has been characterized by resistance and difficulty. The case of *Dothard v Rawlinson* set a precedent for the employment of women in corrections when it utilized the B.F.O.Q. provision to deny women to work in contact positions at the Alabama State Penitentiary in 1977. The struggle for equality has been difficult, and it is far from over.

In terms of similarities among the female officers, many exist. Contrary to popular misconceptions, it appears that female correctional officers are not much different than other women employed in the American workforce. These women are generally between the ages of 26 and 37 years, a large proportion of them are married, and many have children. These females are not brawny, masochistic monsters, but rather they are typical women employed in an extremely non-traditional occupation. However, these women are unique from other women because they work in an environment characterized by disruption, turmoil, and confusion. 71% of the women in my sample had male relatives employed at the penitentiary prior to their employment, and most of these women felt that the existence of a male relative played a positive role in their occupational experience. Fourteen of the officers had no experience in fields related to corrections before their employment at the penitentiary. This lack of experience made their training extremely important, but most of the women reported that their training was not effective. The probation period was difficult for most of the officers due to the harassment and resistance they received from male officers. Their initial interactions with male officers were generally negative, but these interactions improved over time in most of the cases. Supervisors were generally helpful and supportive of the female officers, and these positive relationships extended over time. In regard to their interaction with other females, there were initial negative reactions but these improved over time.

82% of the women believed that they were as capable of performing the job as were their male counterparts. Many of these officers reported that they used different techniques than the male officers which were mostly based upon communication skills and persuasion. The aspect of the job that was most frequently cited as satisfying was the paycheck that the officers received. The second most cited aspect was the sense of accomplishment the officers felt at the end of each day at work. The aspect of the job most officers disliked was having to prove themselves to their male co-worker every day on the job. All of the officers were assigned to the same positions as the male officers,

and the majority felt that women should be assigned to all positions including those protected by the B.F.O.Q. provision of Title VII. 95% of the officers believed that women should not hide their femininity on the job yet at the same time they should not flaunt it. Most women reported that the male officers treat them differently than they treat their fellow male officers. In most cases, the treatment the women received was superior to the fellow male officers. The majority of the women had good working relationships with the inmates and most found them easy to work with.

From the interviews, it appears that working in this occupation changed the view that many women held about themselves. Many felt that the job gave them more self confidence, made them more aggressive, and more critical of others. Finally, all of the officers believed that women have a place in the male correctional facility, and that the future will be a long and difficult road.

Women employed at the Washington State Penitentiary encountered a wide array of structural conditions which acted as barriers to their occupational success. Tokenism and its consequences were an integral part of the female officers' occupational experience. They were highly visible, isolated from the dominant group, and subjected to scrutiny and criticism. This dynamic of tokenism served to make their occupational experiences different from their male counterparts which resulted in more difficulty and problems. The lack of adequate integration strategies also served as a barrier to the female officers. Without these departmental strategies, the women were forced to establish themselves without the assistance of formal policies. Informally, the women had less access to opportunity and power than the male officers. This lack of opportunity and power limited their ability to promote and to establish their credibility with the male staff.

The strategies which the female officers that I studied adopted were similar to those suggested by Lynn Zimmer. The majority of the officers adopted a role that I termed "the artist". These officers utilized their creativity and intelligence as tools to gain inmate compliance. Other officers adopted either the role of the "mechanic" or the "apprentice". Officers adopting the mechanic role were primarily concerned with downplaying their femininity and performing the job using the same techniques as used by the male officers. Those adopting the "apprentice" role believed that they were only capable of performing non-contact positions, and that they should do the tasks which made life easier for the male officers.

Those women who chose an androgynous role ("Artist") did not differ significantly in their scores on the sex-role inventory from the officers who chose a more masculine role ("Mechanic"). The officers who adopted the most feminine role ("Apprentice") had scores on the sex-role inventory that classified them as near feminine or androgynous.

In sum, two of my four hypotheses were well supported by the findings while two were only partially supported. It appears that female officers experience hostility and resentment from the male officers initially, but over time these interactions improve. It was also demonstrated that the concept of tokenism is applicable to the situation of women employed at the Washington State Penitentiary. Tokenism serves as a barrier to the success and integration of the female officers. My hypothesis that females ranking high in masculinity would assume a masculine role was not well supported by the findings. Those officers who ranked high in masculinity adopted both the highly masculine role, and the gender-neutral role. However, my prediction that women scoring high in femininity would assume a feminine role was supported. Those women who ranked high in femininity chose the most feminine role of the three types. One must note that many researchers have questioned the validity of the Bem sex role inventory in its attempt to determine a persons gender orientation from a simple word-assignment strategy. They argue that femininity and masculinity are gestalt, and are not simply statistical groupings of word preferences. Finally, my hypothesis that female officers will bond together in an attempt to solve their common problems was not fully supported. Initially, the women show little or no solidarity, but over time they begin to develop a network. At this time, women at the penitentiary are attempting to establish a formal support group designed specifically for female officers.

Many suggestions for future changes at the Washington State Penitentiary emerged during the course of the interviews.

First, many of the officers reported that the new women being hired for the position of correctional officer are often too young, too insecure, and too inexperienced. The current officers maintain that many of these new women are not capable of effectively performing the job, and serve to both reinforce the negative stereotypes about female officers, and to decrease the security of the institution. The officers who participated in the interviews suggested that there should be more females on the hiring board because they are better prepared to select capable women.

Second, the officers reported that their training did not adequately prepare them for the occupation of correctional officer. The major weakness in the training was that they were not forewarned or prepared for the resentment and hostility that they received from male co-worker. These officers suggested that women should be provided with additional training in regards to dealing with their male co-worker, and male officers should be trained to interact with female officers in a professional manner.

Third, many of the women emphasized the importance of equality in training and on the job experience. They reported that inequality in these areas left them unprepared

for the duties associated with their positions. Being forced to prove themselves every day to male co-worker results in frustration and anger, and ultimately a low amount of job satisfaction. These officers suggested that more attention should be given to the selection of senior training officers, and to the maintenance of occupational equality.

Fourth, the Washington State Penitentiary does not provide female employees with any type of pregnancy leave. Officers who become pregnant are forced to use the sick leave that they have accumulated during their employment at the penitentiary. These officers believe that the penitentiary should provide them with some period of time with pay during the final phase of their pregnancy.

Fifth, the women interviewed believed that some type of organized support system should be constructed to aid the female officers in their struggle to perform their job and to deal with the resentment and resistance of male staff.

This thesis was an attempt to both explore the barriers which females employed in corrections encounter, and to identify the ideal type roles which the female officers adopt. The findings demonstrate the many structural barriers which serve to prevent female officers from succeeding in the occupation. These barriers are firmly embedded in the penal organization, but through the use of communication and creativity, many female officers can overcome these barriers. The suggestions for improvement which emerged from the interviews are intended to make employment at the penitentiary easier for both the current female officers and future female officers. It must be noted that new male officers are also faced with certain barriers to their success, but this reality will have to be the topic of a future thesis.

In regards to the different ideal roles that the female officers adopt, three major types were identified in the study. I formulated these ideal types in response to my interpretation of the coping strategies, used by the female officers, that emerged during the interviews. The three types I identified were the "mechanic", the "apprentice", and the "artist". Officers were categorized according to the information that they provided during the interview. Most of the officers adopted the third type or the "artist". This type of officer appeared to be self-assured, capable, and effective at her job. The ideal types were effective tools for categorizing officers, but it must be noted that none of the strategies used by the officers were as simple as the ideal types might suggest.

The correctional system as a whole has been typically neglected by social researchers. This is an unfortunate fact because the correctional system is an integral part of our society, and its study may yield some important insights about other aspects of our society that are not related to corrections at all. This thesis attempts to study only a minor segment of the whole correctional system, and hopefully future studies will address

many of the other segments that compose the system. Future research could address the following topics:

- A. The barriers and coping strategies used by new male officers.
- B. The day-to-day occupational experiences of the professional staff (religious, medical, and clerical).
- C. The differences between the staff on different shifts.
- D. The impact that the employment of a female relative has upon a male officer.
- E. The perceptions and beliefs of the male officers in regards to the employment of female officers.
- F. The interaction between male officers and female supervisors.
- G. To compare and contrast the staffs employed at two different penal institutions.
- H. The beliefs and attitudes of civilians in regards to the penitentiary.
- I. The experiences and beliefs of female officers throughout the state of Washington.
- J. The beliefs and feelings the male inmates have about female officers.

The system of corrections is a rich source of information and should be studied in order to further an understanding of the people employed within it, the people incarcerated within it, and even the people who are in no way related to it. The suggestions for future research above are in no way exhaustive, and any type of research on the penal institution will be a valuable addition to the minimal information that exists at this time.

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APPENDIX

Investigator: Eric Rovner
Whitman College
Walla Walla, WA
99362

Sponsoring Organization:
Whitman College

Date: March 8, 1989

To correctional officer _____ :

I am currently a senior student at Whitman College working on my senior thesis studying female correctional officers employed at the Washington State Penitentiary. I am interested in the personal experiences, and opinions of female correctional officers regarding their employment at the Washington State Penitentiary. I would like very much to interview you sometime before April 5th, 1989. The interview will be informal and will last between thirty minutes and an hour. This project has been allowed by both the Washington State Penitentiary Administration, and the Department of Corrections in Olympia, WA. If you choose to participate in this study, all the information you supply will be kept strictly confidential, and no names or position titles will appear in the study. The interviews will take place at a time and a location which are convenient to you. The possible locations for the interview to take place are; a classroom at Whitman College, a classroom at the Walla Walla Community College, or any other location that you prefer. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, feel free to contact me at (509) 522-0701, or at the address at the top of this letter.

Following are some questions which will be asked in your interview:

- 1) Describe the training you received to prepare you for the position of correctional officer. Was the training you received sufficient?
- 2) Describe some of the initial reactions of friends and family to your employment as a correctional officer.
- 3) Do you feel your ability to perform the tasks of a correctional officer differ from the abilities of a male officer? If yes, How so?
- 4) What characteristics do you think an "ideal" female correctional officer should have?

If you wish to participate in my study, please sign this consent form and place it in the enclosed envelope that has my name on the front. Your decision to participate will be kept completely confidential. Please take the sealed envelope containing your consent form to the office of the ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT as soon as you complete the form.

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

I wish to participate in the research project being conducted by Eric Rovner concerning Female Correctional Officers employed at the Washington State Penitentiary. I understand that this project has been allowed by both the W.S.P. Administration, and the D.O.C. in Olympia, WA. I also understand that any information I reveal will be kept strictly confidential, and that no names or position titles will appear in the study. Additionally, I may refuse to answer any/all question(s) at my discretion, and I may excuse myself from the study at any time because it is on a voluntary basis only. I also understand that no rewards or punishments are associated with my decision about participation in the study.

Date

Female Officer's Signature

Female Officer's Printed Name

Your Participation will be greatly appreciated, as it will greatly aid in my attempt to compile an accurate account of what it is like to be a female officer in a male correctional institution. The study will serve to inform the public about what female correctional officers are really like, and the results of the study will aid the department of corrections in understanding the unique problems female correctional officers must face. The time that I have to complete this study is quite limited, so I hope to be able to interview you as soon as possible. At the bottom of this form please include your phone number, and an appropriate time for me to call you.

Thank you,
Eric Rovner

Phone Number _____
Good Days To Call _____
Good Time To Call _____

INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION:

My name is Eric Rovner, and I am currently a senior at Whitman College. One of the graduation requirements at Whitman is that each sociology major has to write a thesis about a topic which interests him/her. I have taken a number of classes about the U.S. criminal justice system, and I have become very interested in corrections. I did an internship at the penitentiary last year in which I researched the death penalty, and at this time I met a few female correctional officers. I found them to be quite interesting, and I discovered that very few people have written about female correctional officers. I am very interested in womens studies, and in women working in nontraditional occupations, and it seemed to me that the occupation of correctional officer is about as nontraditionasal as you can get.

The purpose of my study is to gather information about female correctional officers and to compare this information with information about women employed in other nontraditional occupations. Additionally, I would like to explore the unique aspects of the job of correctional officer.

This project has been approved by both the Penitentiary, and the D.O.C. in Olympia. The answers that you provide will be kept strictly confidential, and the study will include no names or position titles.

This interview will last about 45 minutes, and I will ask you a variety of open-ended questions about your occupation as a correctional officer. If you feel uncomfortable about answering any question just say so and I will be happy to skip it. Feel free to include any additional information that you think applies such as personal experiences or insights.

Open-Ended Questions

I) Biographical Information

- (AGE) 1. What is your year of birth?
- (MAR.) 2. Are you married?
- (KIDS) 3. Do you have any children?
- (RELAT) 4. Do you have any relatives who also work at the Penitentiary?
- (EMPLOY) 5. Were you employed somewhere else before the Penitentiary? Was your employment in a field similar to corrections such as law enforcement, or another criminal justice occupation?
- (BEGIN) 6. When did you begin your employment at the Penitentiary?
- (POST) 7. What is the nature of your current position? Contact?

II) Background Information

- (FACTOR) 1. What were the key factors that led you to this occupation?
- (CHOICE) 2. Did you choose to work in a male institution or were you assigned to it?
- (TRAIN) 3. Describe the training you received to prepare you for the position of correctional officer. Was the training you received sufficient?
- (COMP) 4. Was your on the job training the same as the training given to males? If not, how was it different?
- (PROBAT) 5. Describe your probationary period at the Penitentiary.
- (REACT) 6. Describe some of the initial reactions of friends and family to your employment as a correctional officer.
- (MALE1) 7. Describe the nature of your reception/interacion by/with your male supervisors and your fellow male officers during your first two weeks on line.
- (FEMAL1) 8. Describe the the nature of your reception/interaction by/with your female supervisors and your fellow female officers during your first two weeks on line.
- (MALE2) 9. Describe the nature of your current reception/interacion by/with your male supervisors and your fellow male officers.
- (FEM2) 10. Describe the nature of your current reception/interacion by/with your female supervisors and your fellow female officers.

III) Perceptions & Beliefs

- (C.O. Info) 1. Describe the basic tasks of and responsibilities of a correctional officer.
- (ABILITY) 2. Do you feel your ability to perform the tasks of a correctional officer differ from the abilities of a male officer? If yes, How so?
- (SATISFY) 3. What do you see as the most satisfying aspect of your job?

- (DISLIKE) 4. What aspect of your job do you dislike the most?
- (TEAM) 5. Does the correctional staff work as a team or are there divisions among the staff in terms of age, race, gender, or seniority?
- (IDEAL) 6. What characteristics do you think an "ideal" female correctional officer should have?
- (FEMALE) 7. Are you assigned to the same tasks as the male officers?
- (PREFER) 8. Do you believe that women should be assigned to the same tasks as men? I.M.U.?
- (FEMIN) 9. Should female officers hide their femininity, or should they use it as part of their way they deal with inmates and staff?
- (HELP) 10. Do you ever depend upon male officers for assistance?
- (ABILI) 11. Are male officers better at dealing with emergencies?
- (BOND) 12. Do you see a sense of solidarity among your fellow female officers? If yes, please describe it.
- (DIFFIC) 13. What has been the most difficult part about being a female officer? why?
- (JOB) 14. Do you think that most women would be able to do your job?
- (MALES) 15. Do male officers treat you differently than they treat fellow male officers? If yes, How so?
- (OPPOR) 16. Are your opportunities for advancement equivalent to those opportunities available to males? If no, How are they different?
- (INMAT) 17. How do inmates tend to act toward you? Do inmates act differently toward male officers?
- (VIEW) 18. Has being a correctional officer changed the way you view yourself? If so, how has it changed that?
- (IMAGE) 19. How do you feel your employment at the penitentiary affects the way you are perceived by the Walla Walla community?
- (FUT) 20. What do you see as the future for females employed in corrections?

THE BEM SEX ROLE INVENTORY EXPLAINED

Note: The number preceding each item reflects the position of each adjective as it actually appears on the Inventory. A subject indicates how well each item describes himself or herself on the following scale: (1) never or almost never true; (2) usually not true; (3) sometimes but infrequently true; (4) occasionally true; (5) often true; (6) usually true; (7) always or almost always true.

Masculine items	Feminine items	Neutral items
___ 49. acts as a leader	___ 11. affectionate	___ 51. adaptable
___ 46. aggressive	___ 5. cheerful	___ 36. conceited
___ 58. ambitious	___ 50. childlike	___ 9. conscientious
___ 22. analytical	___ 32. compassionate	___ 60. conventional
___ 13. assertive	___ 53. does not use harsh language	___ 45. friendly
___ 10. athletic	___ 35. eager to soothe hurt feelings	___ 15. happy
___ 55. competitive	___ 20. feminine	___ 3. helpful
___ 4. defends own beliefs	___ 14. flatterable	___ 48. inefficient
___ 37. dominant	___ 59. gentle	___ 24. jealous
___ 19. forceful	___ 47. gullible	___ 39. likable
___ 25. has leadership abilities	___ 56. loves children	___ 6. moody
___ 7. independent	___ 17. loyal	___ 21. reliable
___ 52. individualistic	___ 26. sensitive to the needs of others	___ 30. secretive
___ 31. makes decisions easily	___ 8. shy	___ 33. sincere
___ 40. masculine	___ 38. soft spoken	___ 42. solemn
___ 1. self-reliant	___ 23. sympathetic	___ 57. tactful
___ 34. self-sufficient	___ 44. tender	___ 12. theatrical
___ 16. strong personality	___ 29. understanding	___ 27. truthful
___ 43. willing to take a stand	___ 41. warm	___ 18. unpredictable
___ 28. willing to take risks	___ 2. yielding	___ 54. unsystematic

Scoring:

1. Add up the ratings for items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 35, 38, 41, 44, 47, 50, 53, 56, and 59, and divide the sum by twenty. This is the person's Femininity Score.
2. Add up the ratings for items 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 37, 40, 43, 46, 49, 52, 55, and 58, and divide the sum by twenty. This is the person's Masculinity Score.
3. Subtract the Masculinity Score from the Femininity Score, and multiply the result by 2.322. (This approximates the score derived by more complicated statistical procedures.) If the result is greater than 2.025, the person is sex-typed in the feminine direction. If it is smaller than -2.025, the person is sex-typed in the masculine direction. Bem considers a score between 1 and 2.025 to be "near feminine" and a score between -2.025 and -1 to be "near masculine." A score between -1 and 1 means the person is not sex-typed in either direction: he or she is androgynous.